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VOYAGE TO POWER: THE BEDFORDS, 1765-1767

by

KAREN PERRY PHILP

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Political history is an important area for study because it provides the student with insight into the changes occurring within any society. The economic and social changes in Britain of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, for example, were reflected in the changes in membership at Westminster. In order to understand fully eighteenth century Britain, a detailed examination of the politicians and their roles at both Houses of Parliament is necessary.

The historical research of the politicians and their roles at Westminster in the 1760s has been quite thorough. A detailed examination of the Bedfords was needed however to supplement the information already available to the student. This thesis on the Bedfords' two years in political opposition, 1765 to 1767, attempts to redress this imbalance by providing a detailed examination of the events in which the Bedfords actively participated. The American question, the East India Company Inquiry and the Corn Embargo are used to provide insight into the policies advocated by the Bedfords. In addition, the negotiations for office which were quite frequent during this two year period are re-examined through the correspondence of the Bedfords and the Duke of Bedford's personal journal.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Political history is an important area for study because it provides the student with insight into the changes occurring within any society. The economic and social changes in Britain of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, for example, were reflected in the changes in membership at Westminster. In order to understand fully eighteenth century Britain, a detailed examination of the politicians and their roles at both Houses of Parliament is necessary. This thesis provides a detailed examination of the Bedfords while they were in political opposition from 1765 to 1767. This contribution to the historiography of eighteenth century politics in Britain challenges the standard interpretations presently held by historians about the idea of party in the eighteenth century. The rest of this chapter will provide a review of the literature which relates to this topic, and then a short statement about the arguments presented in the following chapters.

In the opinion of historians like Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) and George Macaulay Trevelyan (1867-1962) eighteenth century British political history justified the existence of the Whig party and the party system of government in the nineteenth century. The bias found in their work supported the Whig interpretation of British history. In essence, this held to the theory that the evolution of a strong parliament in the early modern

period had rescued the constitution from monarchical tyranny, and provided Britain with the perfect balance of King, Lords and Commons in government. An example of their admiration for this eighteenth century view is seen in Macaulay's essay (1834) on William Pitt, Earl of Chatham which noted that Pitt was fortunate to live in the era of "...the Whig party...that party which professed particular attachment to the principles of the revolution, and which exclusively enjoyed the confidence of the reigning house..."[1] To the Whig historian of the nineteenth century, if there was a party in the eighteenth century, it was Whig.

This complacent view of the eighteenth century was shattered by Lewis B. Namier in 1929. His revisions revealed the inaccuracies of the 'Whig myth' in two innovative books entitled The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III(1929) and England in the Age of the American Revolution(1930). Namier successfully destroyed the dominant Whig concepts of party and ideology with his detailed research into individual constituencies, and declared that eighteenth century political history could be discussed without reference to either.[2] Namier saw no clear division within the political sphere, and stated that the historian could discern only three loose groupings in Westminster politics. There were first the placemen who were followers

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[1]Thomas Babington Macaulay, "William Pitt, Earl of Chatham", Critical and Historical Essays, 149.
[2]Lewis B. Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III, vii.

of the Court and the Administration, second, the independent country gentlemen, and third, the factions which played personal politics within the confines of Westminster. Namier saw no ideological basis in the nature of politics at the accession of George III in 1760, and then suggested that this conclusion was applicable to the whole political structure of the eighteenth century. Namier's research, at that time, appeared to be definitive, and further work in this area followed his lead. Herbert Butterfield, who wrote The Whig Interpretation of History(1931) and George III and the Historians(1957), tried unsuccessfully to warn students and historians that Namier had been too radical in his conclusions as a result of his need to perforate the domination of the Whig school of thought. Butterfield advocated the application of detailed research to the entire period, but warned historians against ignoring the beliefs and concepts held by eighteenth century contemporaries. In other words, Butterfield advocated a middle ground between the Whig and Namier historical interpretations.[3] Yet no one rallied to Butterfield's call, and the study of eighteenth century political history was left for the most part in the hands of Namier's students. Controversy in the historical interpretation of this subject was renewed in the 1960s and 1970s. Adherents of Namier clashed with a new crop of revisionists like Frank O'Gorman, one of Butterfield's students, who attempted to move the historical

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[3]Herbert Butterfield, George III and the Historians, 194, 210-212, 296-299.

interpretation of this era to a more moderate position with his publication The Rise of Party in England(1975). O'Gorman challenged the Namier view by showing that the Rockingham Whigs in the 1760s and 1780s were a party, and not a group of self-interested 'outs' who wanted to be 'in' the high councils of central government.[4] After having been dormant for nearly two decades, the controversy over the historical interpretation of eighteenth century politics reappeared, renewing interest and excitement among historians and students in this field of study.

Before this discussion can continue, it is necessary to define the terms frequently used by all historians of this period. In contemporary eighteenth century usage 'party' and 'faction' were synonomous terms. George III in particular believed that parties were factious groups of men determined to promote their unscrupulous private ends at the expense of the public good. He commended the Earl of Chatham's firmness in dealing with "...that hydra faction which has never appeared to the height it now does..." during negotiations to enlarge his Ministry by bringing in the Bedfords in the spring of 1767.[5] In contemporary writings, the two terms were frequently used in conjunction, and were difficult to distinguish from each other. For example, Horace Walpole in his Memoirs said "[i]n truth this was the era of faction...", but he immediately delved into a discussion

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[4]Frank O'Gorman, The Rise of Party in England, 474.
[5]Chatham Correspondence, iii. 260-262.

about the use of the terms Whig and Tory by politicians to identify their party.[4] This confusion over labels was illustrated when "George III's mother said to [George Bubb] Dodington: 'The party, this; and the party, that: but I could never understand what the party was; I have endeavoured to learn, and I could never find, that the party was anything else, but the Duke of Devonshire and his son, and old Horace Walpole.'"[5] It can be argued therefore that the ambiguity of the contemporary usages of these terms limits their usefulness in this discussion. Thus, the designation 'faction' will henceforth in this paper refer to men grouped together for personal gain. The term 'party' will indicate a political group which has ideology, internal cohesion or unity, structural organization and a leader. The party's ideology, no matter how rudimentary, must be maintained in opposition, and attempted in office. This ideology should also be used to attract adherents to the party, and to create a unified response to others' policies in Parliament. In order to retain their unity, the physical structure of the organization should include party whips, regular meetings and some type of information distribution system. Finally, the party should be able to survive the death of its leader and continue its policies in the political arena. However it should also be possible to designate a party even if it lacks one or two of the

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[4]Walpole, Memoirs, ii. 66.
[5]Cited in E. N. Williams, The Eighteenth Century Constitution, 173.

above-noted prerequisites.

Most British historians have concurred, that the Whig and Tory parties which dominated the political scene until 1714 began during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679 to 1681.[1] In general terms, the Tories supported the Crown, the Anglican Church, a 'blue-water' foreign policy, and condemned suggestions of a standing army. The Whigs argued that the original contract had limited the monarch to good and honest rule over his subjects, who in turn, had the right to resist any arbitrary rule. Their initial differences of opinion were strengthened by conflicts over the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Bill of Rights (1689), and the Toleration Act (1689). The Tories, in particular, regretted their support of the Toleration Act, since granting the right to nonconformists of their own places of worship and their own preachers proved a greater threat to the established church than they had imagined. The Whigs approved of the Toleration Act, and proclaimed their desire to protect their allies, the Dissenters, from negative Tory backlash. Whig and Tory ideology differed radically in still another area: British participation in continental wars. The Tories advocated the

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[1]The Exclusion Crisis occurred when three bills designed to exclude James, Duke of York, a Catholic, from succeeding his brother to the throne, were introduced in Parliament. In 1679, Parliament was dissolved after the second reading of the initial bill. The second bill was rejected in the House of Lords in 1680, and the following Parliament was convened in Oxford to debate the exclusion of James, but no compromise was reached; Charles II's last Parliament was dissolved.

'blue water' policy of relying on naval protection and avoiding any commitment to expensive European wars. The Whigs believed that it was necessary for Britain to concern itself with European affairs, for trade reasons, or perhaps because of their desire to see France reduced to the point where the French kings could no longer support the Stuart claim to England's throne. These ideological differences which had been tempered during William and Mary's reign, contributed to the 'rage of party' which existed until the Hanoverian Succession in 1714.[9] Robert Walcott in 1956 revised this view of early eighteenth century politics in English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century. He stated that "[t]he more one studies the party structure under William and Anne, the less it resembles the two party system described by Trevelyan..."[10] This was a blatant attempt to apply Namier's conclusions to this early era, and not surprisingly it has been refuted. Geoffrey Holmes in British Politics in the Age of Anne(1967) reaffirmed that the Whig and Tory division was applicable to almost every MP between 1702 and 1714.[11] William Speck in an essay entitled 'Whigs and Tories dim their glories' agreed with Holmes. His work on the parliamentary lists showed that the majority of MPs consistently voted with one of the parties.[12] Brian Hill

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[9]For a comprehensive discussion of this issue, see the following works: H. T. Dickinson, 'The 18th Century Debate on the 'Glorious Revolution'', History, 61(1976), 28-45. W. A. Speck, Stability and Strife, England 1714-1760, 148-152.
[10]Robert Walcott, English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century, 160.
[11]Geoffrey Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne, 6-8.
[12]W. A. Speck, 'Whigs and Tories dim their glories', The

also supported the existence of a Whig and Tory party from 1689 to 1714 in his article 'Executive Monarchy and the Party Challenge...'(1970). Hill provided examples showing that William's attempts to create one Court party out of the two existing ones proved inadequate in that he was forced to rely on younger Whig ministers like Charles Montague, the Earl of Halifax, and Edward Russell, Earl of Orford.'[13] Queen Anne who reigned from 1702 to 1714 was also forced to rely on party for her ministries despite her vocal protestations of enslavement. "'All I desire is my liberty in encouraging and employing all those that concur faithfully in my service, whether they are called Whigs or Tories, not to be tied to one, nor the other...'"[14]

Anne's demise and the rise of the 'Whig oligarchy' from 1714 to 1760 witnessed the end of party according to the Namierite school. The Hanoverian succession and the failure of the Jacobite cause in 1715 had made the Tory ideology less attractive to their supporters. The Act of Settlement of 1701 which conferred the throne on the Hanoverian dynasty was accepted by royal Tories, and the religious controversy had disappeared. Therefore, according to the Namierite school, the old divisions, if indeed one accepted their existence, were no longer relevant. The continuing attack by the Whig oligarchy on the remainder of a discredited and

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[12](cont'd) Whig Ascendancy, 60.
[13]Brian W. Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Party Challenge 1689-1832', Historical Journal, xiii, 3(1970), 383-384.
[14]Cited in Hill, 'Executive Monarchy...', 383.

proscribed Tory party ensured its death. Robert Walpole whose dominance of the Whig oligarchy was consolidated by 1721, relentlessly proscribed the Tories from all political office, and labelled them Jacobites at any opportunity.'[15] The Tories aided Walpole to some extent by their links with the Jacobite plots of 1715 and 1745, and the Atterbury conspiracy of 1722. Walpole was able to discredit all Tories and continue their proscription as a result.'[16] In turn, Walpole was also able to strengthen his control of the Ministry through various political manoeuvers which included obtaining the confidence and support of Queen Caroline, George II's wife. The Tories, according to the Namierite school, realized that they would never succeed to office while Walpole and the Whig oligarchy continued their proscription of the Tories. Thus, the remaining Tories either defected to the Ministry or retired from politics.'[17] The major political issues which arose in this period were divided roughly along Court and Country lines. For example, the 'blue water' foreign policy was now a country ideology, as was the cry for repeal of the Septennial Act passed by the Whigs in 1716. The Namierite school had successfully removed party and ideology from 1714 to 1760, and replaced

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[15]For a more complete discussion of the Whig proscription of Tories, see: Speck, Stability and Strife, 219-238. Linda J. Colley, In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714-1760, 25-50.

[16]Ibid., and Dickinson, 39.

[17]See the following works for the standard view on this issue: K. Feiling, The Second Tory Party, 1714-1832 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1938). J. B. Owen, The Rise of the Pelhams (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957).

it with two new concepts: Court (those in office) and Country (those out of office). This changed in 1979 when Eveline Cruickshanks published her research, The Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45. She maintained that the Namierites had distorted the view of politics from 1715 to 1760 because they had looked at the era from their vantage point of George III's accession in 1760. She maintained that until 1745 and the failed Jacobite rebellion, the Tories were actively seeking to restore the Stuart succession.'* In essence, her work re-introduced political ideology into the historical discussions of this period. However her evidence did not conclusively support her claims nor show that the majority of the Tories were active Jacobites. The failure of the rebellions in 1715 and 1745 indicated that many Tories were perhaps more willing to promise their participation than were willing to participate. Or perhaps the lists given to James Butler, Louis XV's Master of the Horse, purporting to name the Pretender's supporters in England were overly optimistic. In any event, these lists cannot support Dr. Cruickshanks' claim that the Tory party survived Walpole's proscription by clinging to Jacobite pretentions.

Linda Colley's ground-breaking work, In Defiance of Oligarchy(1982), challenged Cruickshanks' conclusions and the Namierite view for the 1714 to 1760 era. She argued that

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'*Eveline Cruickshanks, The Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45, 115-147.

the Tory party existed as a coherent unit with an effective organization until 1754, without the majority being Jacobite. She demonstrated that under the leadership of Sir William Wyndham and his successors, Sir John Hinde Cotton, Watkin Williams Wynn and Sir John Phillips, the Tories retained a separate identity in the House of Commons.[19] Colley attributed some of the Tory hopes to the existence of a reversionary interest which was attached to the Prince of Wales. They hoped that when the King died, the new King would ask them to form his Administration. The Tories were somewhat shaken by the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1751, but according to Colley, retained their opposition to the Whig ministry by gathering around George, the new Prince of Wales. Colley's conclusions concurred with Brian Hill's earlier work, The Growth of Parliamentary Parties 1689-1742(1976). Hill stressed the importance of the succession question at least until the Jacobite failure of 1745. He also showed that Walpole and his successors, the Pelhams, exploited the Tory/Jacobite taint for their own political ends.[20] They wanted to dissuade the Country Whigs from forming any type of alliance with the Tories. The Country Whigs were disaffected Whigs who were opposed to the Whig oligarchy mainly because they wanted to obtain office, and thought that the Ministry would buy them back with an offer of place if they were factious in opposition.

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[19]Colley, 65-69.
[20]Brian W. Hill, The Growth of Parliamentary Parties 1689-1742, 210.

There was negative reaction from historians to Colley's and Hill's thesis research prior to its publication in their respective books. William Speck in 'Whigs and Tories dim their glories'(1981) disagreed with their view of a polarized political world, and through the use of printed division lists indicated that the issues of Anne's reign had been replaced during 1714 to 1760 by divisions between Court and Country. However Speck also noted that although the terms Tory and Whig were replaced by Court and Country, it was difficult to comprehend the differences in meanings. The language of politics had changed from the 'rage of party' under Anne, and the eighteenth century use of expressions such as the Court, the Courtiers, Patriots, the Country party, Tories, the Ministry and the Opposition blurred the issues further in his opinion.[21] The confusion over designations cleared somewhat after the death of Frederick in 1751 when the Country Whigs returned to the Whig ministry's fold, while the majority of Tories switched their interest to the new Prince of Wales. The ascendancy of William Pitt, the 'Great Commoner', after 1756, during the Seven Years' War, tolled the death knell for party distinctions. The resignation of the Duke of Newcastle in 1756 signalled the end of office for the Whig oligarchy, and Pitt's demands in 1759/60 for war on Spain to protect British trade joined as one; the Tories, the Country Whigs and the Patriots.[22] Faction had replaced party by 1760.

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[21]Speck, 'Whigs and Tories...', 60-69.
[22]Ibid., 70.

George III inherited this faction-ridden political world upon ascending the throne in 1760. According to Namier, he was saddled with this frustrating political problem until efficient Prime Ministers like Lord North (1770-1782), and Pitt the Younger (1783-1801, 1804-1806), were discovered and placed in power by the King. They were able to provide long-term management of Parliament for the King by pandering to the personal 'needs' of the members of both Houses. Unfortunately for students and academics, Namier never wrote a detailed account of the latter third of the eighteenth century, but he indicated in his collaboration with John Brooke, that his previous revelations about personal interest dominating the political man were still applicable.[33]

Opposition to Namier's blanket conclusions grew slowly within the historical community which undertook research in this field. Frank O'Gorman in particular attempted to reveal the defects in Namier's thesis. His book The Rise of Party in England illustrated that the Rockingham Whigs fulfilled all the requirements for designation as a party. Their policies and ideology had evolved from a general anti-Bute sentiment which other politicians shared against Lord Bute's perceived secret influence on his student, George III, to their call for economical reform which would abolish sinecures and thereby reduce administrative costs for the

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[33]Lewis B. Namier & John Brooke, The House of Commons, 1754-1790, i. Introductory Survey, ix. 125.

government. The party had an organizational structure with whips and regular meetings. They had Edmund Burke who wrote numerous pamphlets expounding the Rockinghamite Whig view. They also survived the death of the Marquis of Rockingham in July 1782, and became shortly afterwards identified as the Foxite Whigs under the leadership of Charles James Fox. Finally, they attempted to carry out their policies whenever in office.[24] For example, in February 1764, they opposed the Grenville Administration over their handling of the issue of General Warrants. In July 1765, after forming the new Administration, they declared the illegality of General Warrants and promised to restore the army officers dismissed by the Grenville Administration for voting against General Warrants in 1764.[25]

The Rockingham Whig party was perceived by O'Gorman to be the Phoenix which rose from the ashes of the Old Whig oligarchy beaten by Pitt the Elder, and finally crushed by the accession of George III and his favourite, Lord Bute, in 1760. The Rockinghams, according to O'Gorman, were the forerunner of a modern party, and therefore unique in this period. The Rockinghams were the only direct link between the Whig oligarchy of Walpole and the Pelhams, and the Whig party of Lord Grey (1830-1834), since they alone were able to maintain themselves through the lengthy exile from office during Lord North's Ministry (1770-1782), and then William

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[24] O'Gorman, 120-131.
[25] Paul Langford, The First Rockingham Administration, 65-66.

Pitt the Younger's Ministry (1783-1801, 1804-1806). Historians have gradually accepted O'Gorman's assessment that the Rockinghams were unique in being the forerunners of the modern style party in the eighteenth century.

This view does require some revision however. The Bedfords who were forced into opposition after 1765, had many of the characteristics attributed to party. Their leader was John Russell, the fourth Duke of Bedford, who called himself a Whig, yet incorporated a significant amount of 'Country' ideology into his beliefs. The Duke had been the second son of the Russell family, and had planned to enter the House of Commons as an MP. When in 1732 his elder brother died, leaving him the family estates, he automatically entered the House of Lords instead. He immediately joined the disaffected Whigs who opposed Walpole, and became the chairman of their Rump Steak Club which regularly met at the King's Arms Tavern. By 1737, the Club's name had been changed to the Bedford Club: an indication of his personal abilities and influence. By 1760, the rudimentary ideals which were to guide Bedford during the turmoil of the 1760s, had been formed. Bedford protested excise taxes, costs of war, subsidies for Hanoverian troops, standing armies, and the repeal of the Jewish Naturalization Bill in 1753.[24] He felt the repeal, instigated by pressure from outside Westminster, would damage the dignity and

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[24] J. H. Wiffen, Historical Memoirs of the House of Russell, ii. 473-475. Feiling, 80-81.

constitutional jurisdiction of the Houses of Parliament. Beford, due to his wealth and status, also believed in his duty as a member of the aristocracy to protect the country from any type of arbitrary rule. This belief no doubt gave the Duke the confidence to harangue George III for nearly two hours after uncovering his attempts to oust the Grenville and Bedford coalition from the Ministry in the spring of 1765. Bedford presented an ultimatum to the King at that time: George III would be without a Ministry if he did not agree to his Ministers' suggestions.[27] Although this was unusual, Bedford only wanted the guarantee of the King's confidence and an end to any possible secret influence from Lord Bute. To that end, his colleague, George Grenville, demanded the dismissals of Bute's brother from the Scottish Privy Seal and of Lord Holland, a perceived Bute supporter, from the Paymaster-General's office. The King never forgave George Grenville, the commoner, for this affront; but Bedford, the aristocrat, was simply disliked.[28]

Bedford was not well liked by other politicians who were his opponents in Parliament. He was unfairly labelled as a 'peace at any price' man during the negotiations which led to the Peace of Paris in 1763.[29] In fact, Bedford's view

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[27] Fortescue, i. 116-117. 162-177.
[28] This idea is supported by the fact that after July 1765, George III would never readily consider the entrance to responsible office for George Grenville. As this thesis will show, this same attitude was not held against the Duke of Bedford.
[29] E. Johnson, 'The Bedford Connection', 276.

of the war was that the possible gains were less than the actual losses which would have been incurred if Pitt the Elder's war aims were supported by Parliament. This policy which Bedford expounded in letters to his followers early in 1761, concurred with the beliefs of George III and Lord Bute. Bedford was therefore labeled a Bute follower because of this similarity in philosophy, and because he accepted Bute's request to lead the peace negotiations in Paris. In fact, Bedford had formulated his own policy long before Bute ever asked him to take a role in the negotiations; and combined with Bedford's subsequent lectures to the King about Bute's perceived secret influence, it should have indicated to contemporaries that Bedford was his own man.[30] The Bedford party also had an American policy which remained consistent while in office and while in opposition.[31] Their view was that the American colonies had to acknowledge the rights of the British House of Commons to decide all financial legislation for the colonies, and to enforce that legislation by force, if need be. For example, Bedford thought that if the Stamp Act which his party had helped pass in 1765 while part of the Grenville Administration, was repealed in 1766 by the Rockingham Administration, the colonies would never again agree to acknowledge the constitutional supremacy of the House of Commons in its legislative capacity. Therefore when the Rockingham Ministry

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[30]Ibid., 275-279.
[31]Ibid., 28. John Brooke, Chatham Administration, 1766-1768, 255-262. BEO MS. LIII, 20-24.

introduced the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, the Bedfords opposed it totally. They unsuccessfully advocated the modification of the Act rather than the total repeal.[32]

In addition to advocating policies, the Bedford party was a cohesive unit with a solid core of 42 members from 1765 to 1767.[33] The key figures like John Russell, the fourth Duke of Bedford, Richard Rigby, John Montague, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, and Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Gower, wrote letters to their fellow party members asking for their assistance in the House of Commons or the House of Lords on important issues.[34] The party members usually met before important debates to discuss their strategy at Bedford House in London, and they also met at White's Club afterwards. They made use of the newspapers, such as the Protestor to distribute their ideas.[35] The unity of their party was also indicated by the followers leaving en masse after Bedford and Grenville were dismissed from office in July 1765. Certain party members were asked to remain in office but refused to stay without their friends. Contemporaries commented on the wholesale replacement of office holders when the Rockingham Ministry came into office

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[32]Wiffen, 571. Protest Against the Bill to Repeal the American Stamp Act of Last Session (Paris, 1766). Second Protest with a List of Voters against the Bill to repeal the American Stamp Act of Last Session (Paris, 1766).
[33]See attached Appendices for two lists of the Bedford party. The first Appendix gives the names John Brooke, The Chatham Administration, assigns to the Bedfords. The second list is a personal compilation from a variety of sources.
[34]BEO LIV, 88. Bedford to Lorne, 31 August 1766.
[35]Namier & Brooke, i. 75.

in 1765, an indication of its uniqueness. Coalitions were recognized as legitimate routes into office, but it was difficult for any single party member to stay in a Ministry alone.

By joining the opposition ranks, the mettle of the Bedfords was tested. Although opposition for the sake of opposing the King's Ministers for political reasons was not countenanced by the 'country' gentlemen in Parliament, Bedford had to oppose the Administration in order to keep his following. The Bedfords needed to create the illusion that they would return to office in the near future to avert the desertions of supporters, not only from the periphery of the party, but from its core. One way to create this illusion was to remain closely connected with George Grenville and his followers, who had joined them in opposition after the dismissal of the Grenville Ministry in July 1765. By remaining together in opposition, the Grenvilles and Bedfords could provide encouraging numbers in divisions they proposed in both Houses. If they could show enough strength and staying power, perhaps the Administration would crumble, and then the King would ask them to create the next Administration. At least, this was the hope of the Bedfords and Grenvilles in their years of joint exile from office.

The years of exile for George Grenville have been discussed thoroughly in Philip Lawson's recent work, George Grenville: A Political Life(1984). This biography discussed Grenville's position in the House of Commons while in opposition from 1765 to 1770, and illustrated how his knowledge of finance and of parliamentary procedure attributed to his growing esteem among MPs. This recent work was a welcome addition to the historiography of the period immediately after the Grenville Administration's dismissal in July 1765. Unfortunately for the purposes of this thesis, Lawson saw the Bedfords as a family-based faction, and did not adequately discuss their importance to the Grenvilles during the initial stages of their joint exile from office. Other than Horace Walpole's four volume Memoirs, the information about the Bedfords has been provided by John Brooke in The Chatham Administration, 1766-1768(1956). This book discussed the Chatham Administration in great detail, and was the first to provide an adequate appraisal of the three major groups of this era. The information about the Rockinghams provided by Brooke has been supplemented by Paul Langford's work entitled The First Rockingham Administration, 1765-1766(1973), and Frank O'Gorman's book called The Rise of Party in England(1975). Another supplement for the study of the years from 1765 to 1767 was provided by P. D. G. Thomas in British Politics and the Stamp Act Crisis(1975) which examined the question of America and the political problems caused by the Stamp Act

and its repeal by Parliament in 1766. The book's emphasis was on the effects these political problems caused in Westminster, and not in America. Thomas also concentrated his study on the roles played by the Rockinghams, Grenvilles and Chatham, and minimized the Bedfords' activities. Not one of these books adequately covered the role of the Bedford party in Parliament, particularly from 1765 to 1767 when their importance was recognized by their peers who sought their support. Although Brooke did a good job of identifying the Bedfords and discussing their actions while in opposition, he did not break from the idea that the Bedfords were only interested in office for the sake of the power associated with that office. Also the focus of his study was Chatham, and the Bedfords were by necessity relegated to a secondary role. Brooke acknowledged their superior organization in Parliament[36], but then stated that they were 'a family group' connected solely by marriage ties.[37] However Brooke did discuss the party negotiations of July 1767 in great detail. His view that these negotiations were utilized by the Administration in order to split the Opposition's ranks remains valid, but his belief that the Opposition was immediately fractured after the failure of

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[36]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 277.
[37]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 255. In another breath, Brooke nearly contradicted himself with the statement that "...family alliance did not necessarily imply political connection in the eighteenth century."(259) In the case of the Bedfords, political alliance did not necessarily imply family connections. See for a couple of examples, the biographies of Richard Rigby, Alexander Forrester, John Campbell, Marquis of Lorne, in Namier & Brooke, The House of Commons, 1754-1790, ii-iii.

the negotiations should be revised.

Other works on the Duke of Bedford and his party have been less than satisfactory. J. H. Wiffen's Historical Memoirs of the House of Russell(1833) did not devote much space to the fourth Duke's political life, and instead concentrated on the personal life and characteristics which added to the importance of the House of Russell. Christopher Trent's work The Russells(1966) treated the Russell family as reformers who have contributed over the years to the political and social development of England. John Russell, the fourth Duke of Bedford was discussed, but his political actions were overshadowed by Lord John Russell's achievements in the nineteenth century in the author's work. This family history did not provide any more insight into the fourth Duke of Bedford's political activities than Wiffen's history written more than 100 years earlier. Finally, an American scholar, Edward Johnson, completed a doctoral thesis entitled 'The Bedford Connection: The fourth Duke of Bedford's Political Influence between 1732 and 1771'. This study, however, does not provide any information for the two years which the Bedfords spent in opposition. Nor does he provide a thorough discussion of the 'Bute' myth, and the Bedfords' belief in it.[3*] The main purpose of

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[3*]The 'Bute' myth arose after the King's tutor, John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, resigned from the Ministry in April 1763. The King and Bute continued to correspond on political issues, and the contemporary politicians saw this as unconstitutional influence in the Closet. This secret influence was believed to continue until early 1765, if not

Johnson's thesis was to illustrate how Bedford used his social and economic standing to form a proprietary party, which Johnson called the 'Bedford Connection'. Johnson believed that Bedford's political influence at Westminster came from his control of local government, and therefore did not discuss any diplomatic or administrative roles Bedford played. Though Johnson did adequately describe the manner in which Bedford administered his estates for electoral and parliamentary profit, he did not state whether this was unusual behaviour for a wealthy, landed aristocratic family.

The arguments presented in the next three chapters will augment the information provided by Johnson and Brooke, and thereby add to the historiography of the Bedfords and the two years they spent in opposition from 1765 to 1767. The years of opposition illustrated that the Bedfords were a party, and not a faction as the Namierite school would propose. The examination of these two years will show that the Bedfords were able to retain their identity as a party, and were politically astute as well. The fact that they were approached seven times in these two years by Chatham's Administration, the Rockinghams, the Grenvilles and Lord Bute, to add either to the present Administration, or to help form a new one, surely indicates their importance for

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[38](cont'd) longer. But the important point was that the politicians like Bedford used this myth to their own political advantage. To rally the support in Parliament of the undecided MPs, the Bedfords would point to Bute's secret influence.

understanding the events which occurred in these years. This thesis will attempt to provide new avenues of approach to the history of this period, and illustrate the necessity for further research to be undertaken in this field. A more detailed study of the MPs who were not aligned to any 'named' group in Parliament is required to augment the research carried out to date. An examination of the House of Lords, where the Bedfords were particularly active, is also needed to supplement our present knowledge of the eighteenth century. This thesis will raise some questions which only further research into the activities of the Bedfords can answer. Unfortunately due to space and time limitations, this work must devote itself to a detailed account of the political events which occurred between the Regency Crisis of 1765, caused by the King's bout with illness in February and March, and the accession to office of the Bedfords in December 1767.

II. CHARTING NEW WATERS

Until the King's illness in early 1765, the Grenville Administration appeared to contemporaries as firmly entrenched in its role as the King's advisors. The session which had commenced 10 January 1765 illustrated the strength of the Bedfords and Grenvilles in both Houses. A quiet session was expected by contemporaries as indicated by the easy passage of the Stamp Bill in February 1765 when only 40 voted against it in the House of Commons, and the Bill passed unanimously in the House of Lords.[39] The Opposition to the Administration was weak, and therefore posed no threat to the Ministry.[40] The Administration with its strength in the two Houses of Parliament should have been able to continue in office until the next general election in 1768. But, as the diarist, Horace Walpole related in a story from Monsieur Chavigny, a Minister from France:

> 'I have observed that when the warmest sessions have been expected in Parliament, they have proved most inactive; and...when all was thought to be over, somebody has cried out, 'Voila un lievre!' Another has replied, 'Il n'y a point de lievre!' and at last everybody has run to see if there was a hare or not.' This I have known to be a very just remark twice at least in my memory; formerly, on the Marriage Act and the Bill of Regency in 1751; and now it tallies to the occasion, as if drawn from it.'[41]

The event which heated the spring session in 1765 was the Regency Bill debate in April, and the desperate search by the King for a new complement of ministers. The insult

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[39] Parliamentary History, xvi. 40.
[40] Langford, 6.
[41] Walpole, Correspondence, xxii, Walpole to Mann, 14 May 1765.

made by the Administration to the Princess Dowager during this crisis, compounded with Bedford and Grenville's obnoxious behaviour to the young King in his own Closet, contributed to the growing alienation of the King's affections for his Ministers. These actions were the impetus for George III to search for a new Ministry. William Pitt, the 'Great Commoner', was George's first choice to lead a new Administration, but Pitt refused to enter office without Lord Temple, and Temple declined all Pitt's offers. The Duke of Cumberland came to his nephew's rescue and played a leading role in the creation of the 'lutestring ministry' in July 1765 from the followers of Newcastle and Rockingham. Though the Administration was not expected to last the summer, the Rockingham Whigs survived the year despite the death of Cumberland, and the lack of confidence from other members of both Houses. The Bedfords apparently believed that the Ministry was doomed to failure. The Duke left for Paris shortly after the investiture of the new Administration on 10 July 1765. Although Grenville kept in touch with Lord Sandwich, a Bedford follower, there was no concerted effort to create an Opposition program for the Fall session.

The Regency crisis took everyone by surprise. On 5 April 1765 the Cabinet which consisted of Northington, the Lord Chancellor, Bedford, the Lord President, Halifax, the Southern Secretary of State, Sandwich, the Northern

Secretary of State, and Grenville, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, decided that in accordance with George III's wishes, "...a Regency should be appointed;...(and)...communicated to Parliament in a Speech from the Throne..."[42] The Regency to be employed should the King die unexpectedly was to be appointed by a Council composed of various ministers and crown appointees; and eligibility for the Regency was to be restricted to the Queen and members of the Royal Family born in England. On 24 April 1765 the King delivered this proposal in his Speech to both Houses. The question of who comprised the Royal Family was raised immediately by MPs and Lords. The Bedfords, who had hoped the term 'Royal Family' would be accepted with little discussion, were forced to disclose that the Princess Dowager was not included under the term. By excluding the Princess Dowager's name, the Bedfords intended to antagonize Lord Bute.[43] The Bedfords believed in Bute's secret influence in the King's Closet ever since he left formal office in April 1763, and were as willing as the Rockinghams to reveal publicly Bute's influence with the young George or to antagonize Bute in any possible way. The Regency crisis was not the first clash of this kind. For example, in January 1765 the Primacy of Ireland had become vacant, and when it appeared that Grenville's nominee would lose the post to Bute's candidate, Bedford strenuously lobbied for the appointment of Bishop Carmichael. As a Scot, Carmichael

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[42] Fortescue, i. 73.
[43] Add. MS 47,584, 31-32. 22 April 1765.

would have been seen as a Bute appointee simply because of his nationality, and the Bedfords hoped the negative public response would embarrass Bute.

Unfortunately for the Bedfords, the Regency Bill which proposed to exclude the Princess Dowager did not embarrass Bute as they had hoped. However it did reflect poorly on the Bedfords themselves. When the King realized the insult to his mother, and Parliament inserted her name as a candidate for the Regency, the Bedfords did not adhere to their demand for her exclusion. The amendment allowing the Dowager Princess of Wales to be cited as one of the Royal Family in the Bill went to a vote on 12 May 1765, and the Bedfords in the Commons did not divide; and in the Lords, Bedford and his followers did not speak in support of their previous proposal to exclude the Princess Dowager from consideration.[44] This was an unusual Parliamentary event. The Bedfords were not known to back away from any stance they took on political issues. In this case, the Bedfords realized that they could only do more harm to their own reputation by pushing this point, and preferred to let the matter drop as quietly as possible.

Despite the Ministry's changed stand on the Regency Bill and the inclusion of the Princess Dowager in the Bill, the King's antipathy towards Bedford and Grenville increased

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[44]Lyttelton, Memoirs, iii. 675. Add. MS 47,584, 32. 12 May 1765.

during this period. George asked the Duke of Cumberland, his uncle, to aid him as early as 7 April 1765, but this initiative faded quietly during the Regency crisis.[45] The Duke of Bedford was aware of the King's desire for a change of Ministers by 9 May during the height of the Regency debate, but his attention was diverted by his own problems. The Duke's stand against the Bill increasing duties on imported Italian silks was unpopular with the unemployed silk weavers in England, and they marched on Bedford House in London on 17 May. In Bedford's own opinion, their activities were due to the direct influence of Lord Bute, but this was unlikely since Bute was not as involved in politics at this time as Bedford believed.[46] Also, if the King was being manipulated by Bute and Bute was directing this personal attack on Bedford, why would George III issue a Proclamation on 21 May authorizing Justices and Lord Mayors to do their utmost "...to prevent and suppress all Riots, Tumults and unlawful Assemblies..."?[47] Bedford should have realized that the Duke of Cumberland, not Lord Bute, was the prime influence in the Closet, particularly since Bedford knew that Cumberland was attempting to create a new Administration.[48]

In late spring 1765, a new administration was George III's fervent hope. He wanted to be rid of those leaders in

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[45]Langford, 8.
[46]BEO LI, 118. Bedford to Marlborough, 19 May 1765.
[47]London Gazette, 18-21 May 1765.
[48]BEO LI, 118. Bedford to Marlborough, 19 March 1765.

the Grenville Ministry whom he personally detested, and although William Pitt was his first candidate, anyone who would rescue him was welcome. Pitt refused to join the King without his cousin, Lord Temple. Temple refused to help Pitt create a new Ministry which would oust his brother, George Grenville, from public office. Temple and Grenville had effected a personal and political reconciliation that spring.[1] But although Pitt was related to Grenville as well, he saw no reason to honour blood ties in the political world, and could not see why Temple would. Lord Temple was to be Pitt's eyes and ears in any proposed Administration, since Pitt had no other followers whom he could trust as explicitly as his cousin. Pitt, after considering the matter, had to refuse to aid the King. Other Members of Parliament, including the Rockinghams, were approached to create a broad-bottom Administration during April and May 1765, but they all refused the King's request. The task of defending themselves in Parliament against the organized forces of the Bedfords and Grenvilles loomed too large. George was therefore forced to retain the Bedford and Grenville Ministry. The Ministers were fully aware of the King's unsuccessful attempts to depose them, and they used that knowledge for their own benefit.

On 22 May 1765 the Administration demanded three concessions from the King before it would consider remaining

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[1]Ross Hoffman, The Marquis: A Study of Lord Rockingham, 1730-1782, 72.

in office. The Duke of Cumberland described these negotiations as the "'Guerre de Pots de Chambre'..."[50] but as he himself could not find anyone willing to take on the challenge of office, he could not advise George to dismiss the Ministers outright. Their demands were the appointment of Lord Weymouth to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland; the removal of Mr. Mackenzie, Bute's brother, as the Keeper of the Privy Seal in Scotland; and finally, the replacement of Lord Holland, a perceived Bute supporter, by Charles Townshend in the Paymaster General's office.[51] These demands were sine qua non for their remaining in office, although they agreed to the deletion of their fourth demand for the appointment of Lord Granby to Commander in Chief of the Militia which had been previously promised to the Duke of Cumberland. Bedford and Grenville wanted to remove Bute's secret influence, and they wanted the King to smile on them in public. Unfortunately for them, there was never any Bute influence to remove, and the King was even more disgusted with the Administration for its wanton demands. In particular, he did not want to dismiss Mackenzie because he had promised his position for life. Also the King was subjected to interminable harangues about his lack of public support for Grenville and Bedford, and this was the ultimate insult to his intelligence and ears.[52] On 12 June 1765 the Duke of Cumberland was asked quietly to continue his search

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[50] Fortescue, i. xi.
[51] Namier & Brooke, iii. 545.
[52] Bedford Correspondence, iii. 286-288.

for a Ministry which could rescue George from this obstreperous Administration, and George prorogued Parliament until 11 July in order to avoid contact with these Ministers.

The Ministers were aware of Cumberland's mission, and their letters indicated that they expected their immediate dismissal throughout the month of June and early July. On 17 June Sandwich advised Bedford "...the common language of the town is, that our political life is not likely to last many days..."[53] And on 18 June Halifax wrote to Woburn Abbey that "...there was a very thin drawing room at St. James's on Sunday, but much whispering and a strong appearance of Intrigue & Cabal."[54] During this time, the Bedfords continued to press their own position in the Administration. For example, when the matter of a candidate for the position of Master of the Ordnance for Ireland arose, the Bedfords proposed Jeffrey Amherst since it was "...as good an opportunity as any other to try our strength in the Closet."[55] However their strength in the Closet was weakening.

Bedford and Grenville had left London for their country estates as soon as the Houses adjourned. Despite requests by Sandwich to return to the City, they decided it was more

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[53]BEO LI, 188. Sandwich to Bedford, 17 June 1765.
[54]BEO LI, 196. Halifax to Bedford, 18 June 1765.
[55]BEO LI, 188. Sandwich to Bedford, 17 June 1765, and BEO LI, 192. Sandwich to Bedford, 18 June 1765.

appropriate to remain outside the action in London.[56] The newspapers reported on 22 June 1765 that there was "...a grand conference in the country...", while William Pitt met privately with the King for three hours at the Queen's Palace.[57] However it was not until 24 June that Grenville and Bedford proposed to meet together to talk over the situation.[58] At the same time, Pitt had again agreed with the King on the idea of a new non-party Administration, if Lord Temple could be persuaded to head the Treasury. George III consented to Pitt's demands for a condemnation of general warrants, the repeal of the cider tax, and even an alliance with Prussia, but as the King anticipated, Temple again refused.[59] On 26 June, Bedford wrote to Grenville thanking him for notification of Temple's refusal. He crowed that "...our enemies have been defeated in their main object which seems to me to have been, the uniting under the banners of the Duke of Cumberland, the favouritism of Bute, and the popularity of Mr. Pitt" and then suggested that Temple take his position in the Ministry since "...I can never with pleasure or quiet to my own mind, after the treatment I have received both from the King and Publick, serve either in the capacity of a Minister,..."[60] Bedford

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[56]BEO LI, 200. Sandwich to Bedford, 19 June 1765. BEO LI, 204. Sandwich to Grenville, cc. Bedford and Halifax, 19 June 1765. BEO LI, 212. Sandwich to Bedford, 20 June 1765.
[57]Westminster Journal and London Political Miscellany, #1071. Saturday, 22 June 1765.
[58]Add. MS 57,811, 29. Bedford to Grenville, 23 June 1765.
[59]Fitzmaurice, ii. 331.
[60]BEO LI, 228-231. Bedford to Grenville, 26 June 1765. Add. MS 57,811, 31-32. Bedford to Grenville, 26 June 1765.

was unhappy with the King's attitude towards his ministers, and he simply wanted an end to all secret influence in the King's Closet.

But the activity in the King's Closet increased, and by 3 July 1765 the Bedfords were aware of the impending change of Administration which was not to be fashioned by William Pitt. On 3 July Sandwich wrote

> ...that all was fixed; Lord Rockingham at the head of Treasury, and the Duke of Grafton and Lord Egmont Secretaries of State: from this I concluded that the thing would come out today but we have all been at Court & in the Closet & nothing new has transpired tho' it is still believed that this strange arrangement will take place.''

Pitt refused to be involved in the Ministry, but the key players believed that he would eventually join with them. The interesting aspect of Pitt's refusal to join any administration without Temple's participation, was Temple's own reasoning. It could have been that Temple refused to compromise his recent reconciliation with his brother, Grenville. It may also have been possible that Temple felt any administration which did not have the strength in both Houses would not last long enough to make it worth his time. He could have thought that Pitt's illness would keep Pitt from handling the Commons, and therefore he would be vulnerable to attack from the Opposition if he took the Treasury in a Pitt Ministry. Finally, if Temple were offered Bedford's position as Lord President in the Grenville

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''BEO LII, 8-9. Sandwich to Bedford, 3 July 1765.

Administration,'[2] he would be given a place in a strong Ministry with no fear of vitriolic attack from Members of either House. Unfortunately, Temple never left a written record of his reasons for refusing to join Pitt in the creation of a new Administration, and therefore his thoughts on this matter are unknown. His refusals to join with Pitt obviously encouraged the Opposition, because it kept Pitt, whom they perceived as a greater political threat than the Rockinghams, out of the Closet.

Before the inauguration of the new Cumberland/Rockingham Ministry on 10 July 1765, the Bedfords as a group underwent their first serious test when the Duke of Cumberland offered the position of Master of the Horse to the Duke of Marlborough. Despite the King's expressed eagerness for the Duke to accept the offer, Marlborough wrote to Bedford on 5 July that he "...could not think of leaving all my friends without rhyme or reason merely for the sake of having His Majesty's arms upon my Chariot."[3] The same day, Bedford replied that it was "...the greatest insult to you, to suppose you would enter headlong into a Plan which you was not informed (sic), and which depended upon the caprice of one who had declared himself the most determined enemy of me and my Friends..."[4] The exchange illustrated that the Bedfords started as they meant to go

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[2]BEO LI, 228-231. Bedford to Grenville, 26 June 1765.
[3]BEO LII, 12. Marlborough to Bedford, 5 July 1765.
[4]Ibid.

on. They were not a group of individuals grasping for personal gain at the expense of friendship and principles. Further illustration of this fact was provided after the dismissal of the Ministers when a mass resignation of the followers of Bedford and Grenville ensued. This event was unusual by contemporary standards.[15] Politicians agreed with Horace Walpole's sentiments that "...at last the four tyrants are gone! undone by their own insolence and unpitied!"[16] However the dismissal and subsequent resignations of the Bedfords caused concern among those contemporaries who worred about the increasing domination of factions and parties in Administrations, and in Opposition.

The official move into Opposition was a relief for Bedford. The Duke noted that he was happy "...that the Farce is at last at an end...".[17] After Parliament was prorogued again until 17 December 1765, Bedford left for Paris.[18] Little discussion occurred amongst the Opposition members, although Grenville and Sandwich did correspond. There was minimal planning for the direction the Opposition would pursue when the Fall Session commenced.[19] The Opposition thought that the 'lutestring ministry' could not last, and

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[15]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 21.
[16]Walpole, Correspondence, xxii. 309.
[17]BEO LII, 30. Bedford to Sandwich, 10 July 1765.
[18]Note that information for the summer is scarce since Horace Walpole was also away from London from August 1765 to April 1766.
[19]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 21. Brooke stated that Grenville and Bedford immediately made plans for Opposition. I have not found any written proof to support this claim.

the general concensus was that in the Fall, Pitt would step forward to form a new Administration.[70] But the Rockinghams were not sitting back waiting for their own demise. They attempted to entice members of the Opposition onto their side of the House. For example, in September, the Marquis of Lorne, a Bedfordite and a son of a Scottish peer, was appointed to command the First Royal Regiment. Lorne advised Bedford that he would remain as attached to the Duke "...with regard to my Parliamentary conduct as any man of principle and conscience can be to the person for whom he has the highest esteem and to whom he owes the greatest obligations."[71] This promise was kept and in February 1766, Lorne voted against the Administration on the repeal of the Stamp Act. However in December 1766, Lorne's self-interest overcame him and he accepted an English peerage from the Chatham Ministry, and joined the ranks of government supporters.

By the fall the Opposition had begun to think about the tactics to pursue in the next parliamentary sitting. On 13 November 1765 Sandwich wrote to Bedford that Halifax and Gower approved of the measures which were decided at Bath for the upcoming session.[72] That there was a meeting of the Bedfords and Grenvilles in Bath sometime in early November was confirmed by Newcastle in a letter to Mr. Offley, 23

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[70]Langford, 4.
[71]BEO LII, 134. Lorne to Bedford, 6 September 1765.
[72]BEO LIII, 202. Sandwich to Bedford, 13 November 1765.

November 1765:

> ...What the late Ministers and Their Friends will do, I cannot tell. There have been great meetings of them all at Bath. Lord Gower and Lord Waldegrave went down to Bath this week; and are gone from thence to My Lord Weymouth's. Mr. Pitt is there for his health; certainly without any connection or correspondence with them.'[73]

The exact date of this meeting of the former administration is unknown but it appeared to have occurred around the 13th of the month. The topic of discussion concerned the growing colonial resistance to Grenville's Stamp Tax.'[74] The Bedfords who believed in strong measures to control the growing resistance of the colonists, had their own reports arriving from the American colonies.'[75] The Opposition's later attention in both Houses to the American question and the repeal of the Stamp Act also indicated that these topics were discussed at this meeting.'[76]

On 17 December at the opening of Parliament, Grenville began a debate on the King's Address by proposing an Amendment to declare that the American provinces were in rebellion. The King's Address had promised to provide some accounts of the American situation for Parliament's

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'[73]Add. MS 32,972, 21-22. Newcastle to Offley, 23 November 1765.
'[74]Thomas, 156.
'[75]PRO 30/29/5, 583-586. 3 November 1765.
'[76]As an aside, the comment made by Newcastle about Pitt not seeing the ex-ministers in Bath was totally fallacious. The Duke of Bedford paid a social call on William Pitt, and Pitt wrote his wife that they had discussed "...houses in the Circus, pleasant airings, Somersetshire prospects, etc; fitting discourse for such emeriti, as we are." Chatham Correspondence, 335-336. Pitt to Lady Chatham, 24 November 1765. Thomas, 156.

consideration in the near future. The Opposition wanted the public reiteration of Westminster's legislative supremacy over all colonial actions. When lack of support for these strong words became apparent, Grenville withdrew his motion and a watered-down Address passed nem. com.'' Meanwhile, Bedford led the Opposition attack in the House of Lords by requesting that the papers relating to the American Stamp Act be presented to the House. The Duke of Grafton panicked and asked Bedford to withdraw his motion, since the King had already signified his intention to present the Houses with the papers. Grafton did not have the King's prior permission to make this statement, and the Opposition considered it a minor victory to counter their failure in the Commons.

On 18 December 1765 Onslow wrote to Newcastle from the House of Commons that the Administration had defeated the Opposition 70 to 35 on a motion calling for the American Papers which Grafton had made the gaffe of promising to present in the House of Lords.'' These numbers indicated the problems for the Opposition in getting their followers into the House in a pre-Christmas session. Part of the problem for the Opposition was due to the widespread belief that the Rockingham Ministry was inexperienced and unlikely to last much longer, particularly after the death of the Duke of Cumberland on 31 October 1765. In any event, Edmund Burke

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''Lawson, George Grenville, 225.
''Add. MS 32,972, 281. Onslow to Newcastle, 18 December 1765.

chortled at the Opposition's poor showing in a letter written on 24 December:

> They tell a mighty good humour'd thing of Rigby; when somebody said to him, Rigby you made but a poor figure on the Division; but you had the advantage of being in the right in point of argument. 'In the right; No! Damme a minority never was in the right from the beginning of the world to this day; a minority is always absurd.' I never saw Opposition carried to such a length as in Rigby laughing aloud in the house at George Grenville's dull Jokes.''

Grenville and Bedford were trying to keep their followers interested in opposing the government, and therefore to retain their followers. But they were also aware of the necessity of appearing ready and able to place themselves into the Administration, and to that end, poor division figures had to be avoided.

Parliament was prorogued until 14 January 1766, and over the recess the Bedfords decided to press the Rockingham Administration immediately at the next meeting of Parliament. Sandwich proposed a question and a division for the opening day of the session in a letter he wrote to Bedford on 6 January. The American question was to be of the utmost importance for Sandwich believed that the Rockinghams wanted

> ...to repeal the Stamp Act, but they are meeting with so many obstacles & are so divided among themselves on this business; that if we press them frequently upon it,...I am persuaded it will be as fatal to them as the Regency Bill was to those who went before them.''

''Burke, Correspondence, 223-224. Burke to Charles O'Hara, 24 December 1765.
''BEO LIII, 5. Sandwich to Bedford, 6 January 1766.

Sandwich also wanted a meeting before Parliament re-opened on the 14th in order to plan the conduct of the united Opposition on that Tuesday. No doubt this was to bolster the Opposition's morale after the relatively poor showing in December's division. The Bedfords thought that the Administration was planning to repeal the Stamp Act, but they did not know what stance William Pitt would take on the issue on 14 January 1766. Apparently Pitt himself did not know what his exact position on the repeal of the Stamp Act would be until he was actually in the Commons, denouncing the Stamp Act and the former Grenville Administration.[11] The Bedfords were furious with Pitt for his denunciation of their role in the passage of the Stamp Act.[12] Although Pitt's denunciation of the Stamp Act did not decide the Rockingham Ministry's policy, it had an immense impact on Parliamentary opinion which enabled the Administration to convince reluctant MPs, like Charles Yorke, that repeal was practical.[13] Bedford's immediate response to this repeal policy was noted in a personal memorandum on North America which outlined the Bedford party policy. Whether this paper was copied and passed among his followers is unknown, but it seems highly likely since the several pages outline the tactics to pursue in both Houses of Parliament. He also wrote the paper as though it was meant to be read by others.

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[11]Hoffman, 106. In his speech, William Pitt stated explicitly that "...every capital measure they (the Grenville Administration) have taken, has been entirely wrong."(Proceedings, iv. 288.)
[12]A. Hillard, ed. Macaulay's Essays on Pitt and Chatham, 98.
[13]Thomas, 172-173.

Although historians of this period have overlooked it, his friends and contemporaries did read it carefully. The paper outlined his thoughts on American policy, as follows:

> I think in treating in our House the affair of the Tumults and Riots, which have happened in much of the Colonies in North America in Opposition to the Stamp Act, it will be absolutely necessary not only to understand one another perfectly well, but also to take such joint measures with our Friends in the House of Commons, as shall appear upon the most mature deliberation the properest to withstand the efforts of the Administration (should they be hardy enough to attempt it) for obtaining an Act of Parliament to rescind the Stamp Duty Act, upon the Principles of its being either an illegal, an impolitic, or an unpracticable one.[84]

Bedford feared that any weakening of the government's resolve in applying taxation in the colonies would result in the disgrace of Parliament and in open rebellion in North America. He thought that in fifty years, the independent spirit of the colonists would be such that they would be dangerous rivals to the British merchants and legislators. The Duke thought of "...the submission of the Americans to the Stamp Act, as the Palladium, which if suffered to be removed, puts a final period to the British Empire in America."[85] Bedford suggested five steps for the Opposition to propose in Parliament:

> (1)ascertain the right of the British Parliament to tax the Colonies;
> (2)if this right to tax is legal, the resolutions of the American assemblies should be condemned;
> (3)the riots and tumults in North America, should be found, on the face of the papers laid

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[84]BEO LII, January 1766.
[85]BEO LIII, 17. January 1766. J. Wiffen, Historical Memoirs of the House of Russell, ii. 571.

before the House;
(4)a declaration against these riots should be prepared;
(5)the rebellious colonists should be reduced to due obedience to the sovereign legislative authority of Great Britain.[16]

Bedford also realized that what may be constitutionally correct, may not necessarily be politically expedient. He jotted down the political reasons for taxing the colonies on a separate sheet of paper. His political reasons were:

(1)The burthen has been too long born by Great Britain, who at an immense expence, has secured them from all foreign Enemies, and which still must continue, should America bear a small part, which it is just she should do.
(2)She is of ability to do it, by increase of her Trade & Bounties given her, The State of her remittances to England.
(3)All other parts of the King's dominions bear their share for instance Ireland which formerly was supported by England, but now pays largely to the publick, and bears the charges of her own Government.[17]

Bedford had no compassion for the complaints of the English manufacturers who feared for their financial livelihood. He felt that they had been deceived by false representations from the colonists.[18] The Duke stressed that the exertion of

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[16]BEO LIII, 18. January 1766.
[17]BEO LIII, 20. January 1766.
[18]See Langford, 177-185, and Thomas, 214-252. for an outline of the petitions from the colonists and English manufacturers to Parliament, and the Administration's clever selection of various petitions to rally support for the Repeal. Langford stated that the Commons believed there was a causal link between the Stamp Act legislation and an economic crisis in Britain, but he questioned the validity of their assumption by illustrating how exports continued to decline after the Repeal of the Stamp Act. It was not until two years later that any improvement was seen in the financial crisis. Langford outlined the fallacies in the Administration's arguments for this causal link: firstly, their over-emphasis on British trade with America which was no more important than their trade with the continent; and secondly, the claim that the slump in the economy was due to

the present laws was the best protection for their American debts. The moral and intellectual leanings of the Bedfords supported George Grenville's political platform wholeheartedly. This was perhaps why the Opposition was often seen as one party by historians of this period instead of being two parties united in Opposition which was the actual case. Although Grenville was frequently given credit for the actions taken by the Opposition during this period, he never prepared a similar circular on American policy. Bedford knew of the issues and had his own ideas which his friends also believed and espoused in Parliament.

On 29 January 1766 the two parties in Opposition agreed to propose the following joint resolution formulated at the Star and Garter Tavern:

> That the Resolutions of the Assembly of the Province of Virginia contain an absolute disavowal of the Right of the Parliament of Great Britain to impose taxes on her colonies, and a daring attack on the constitution of this country...That it appears to this Committee that His Majesty's Subjects in several parts of North America have in a riotous & tumultuous manner obstructed & opposed the execution of a law passed the last session of Parliament.[8]

It was agreed by the Bedfords and Grenvilles that if the Ministry did not assert the right of the British legislature to tax the colonies then the Opposition would be forced to

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[8](cont'd) the Stamp Act. Langford showed that the economic problem was due to other conditions; such as the British acquisition of the Spanish and French islands in the West Indies which contributed to a commercial glut in Continental and Caribbean markets. Langford concluded that the British were caught up in a widespread economic depression independent of the American discontent.
[8]BEO LIII, 24. Suffolk to Bedford, 29 January 1766.

propose its own motion to that effect. The Duke of Bedford and his followers felt that a firm hand dealing with the colonists' complaints would resolve the problems in North America. Their consistency on this issue was evident in their attempts to arouse public support in a pamphlet entitled Protest Against the Bill to Repeal the American Stamp Act of Last Session, published in early 1766. This pamphlet echoed the sentiments Bedford had penned earlier in January.'° This attempt to garner public support for their political stand indicated an appreciation and recognition of the role popular opinion could play at Westminster.

Nonetheless, in February and March 1766 the Administration with Pitt's support, repealed the Stamp Act because of the petitions received from the colonists and merchants in Britain, and passed a Declaratory Act. This latter Act was to reiterate that Parliament had the constitutional right to pass legislation for the colonies in all areas whatsoever. In a last ditch effort, Bedford was said to have attempted to avert the repeal of the Stamp Act by advocating modification rather than repeal. Rumours existed that George III himself preferred modification to repeal of the Act. The Bedfords used this information to attempt to regain the King's favour. However, in late January 1766 it was Lord Bute, through the auspices of Lord Eglinton, who had quietly asked whether the Bedfords and the

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'°BEO LIII, 18-20. January 1766.

Grenvilles would be willing to participate in a new Administration.''[1] Bedford and Grenville agreed, with the caveat that "...his Majesty would permit us to tread the same paths we had before taken, during our administration..."'[2] Bedford noted on 18 February 1766 that he and Grenville agreed to meet Bute at Lord Eglinton's house on 10 February. Due to confusion over the meeting time, the actual meeting did not take place until slightly after 1 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 February 1766. Bute was authorized at that time by the two leaders to proceed on their behalf in negotiations with the King. However by Monday, 17 February when they had not heard anything further from Bute, the Duke of Bedford approached the Duke of York, with Grenville's knowledge, to make further inquiries about Bute's offer. Their meeting resulted in the message, through York, to George III expressing Bedford's willingness to serve his Majesty if he preferred modification rather than repeal of the Stamp Act. The message was carefully worded, so that its meaning could be construed in two ways. The King asked for Lord Egmont's opinion, and replied in the negative on 18 February. The King had considered Bedford's offer but decided that since Bedford's intimation was that "...he is willing to attend me by way of offering his advice & assistance in regard to the Stamp Act; I cannot take notice of it as I do not think it Constitutional for the Crown

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''[1]Scottish Record Office, G.D. 32/24/19. Eglinton to Gen. James Murray, Spring, 1766.
''[2]Bedford Correspondence, iii. 328.

personally to interfere in Measures which it has thought proper to refer to the advice of Parliament."'[3] Although accused by contemporaries and historians of trying to worm his way into office at this point, Bedford never offered his followers to the King for incorporation into the Administration, and the King never acknowledged this aspect of the message. Bute had initiated the transaction, and both Grenville and Bedford agreed to pursue the matter. Whether the King had communicated with Bute is unknown, but Bedford noted that Bute had extended the invitation for negotiation from a source close to the King. And the King and Bute had reactivated their personal correspondence in January 1766, although Grenville and Bedford never acknowledged that the two had stopped corresponding. Why Bute did not continue his correspondence with the Duke of Bedford after their meeting at Eglinton's is curious, and whether the King's subsequent refusal of Bedford's veiled offer was due to their wish to reinstitute their old Ministry is unclear. The Opposition had thought that the Repeal of the Stamp Act would result in the King's displeasure with his Ministers, and the end of the Administration. Bedford and Grenville thought that their negotiation for office could be successful since they offered an alternative to repeal. However, after this confusing negotiation, the Rockinghams were still safely ensconced in office, and the Bedfords and Grenvilles remained in Opposition.

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[3] Fortescue, i. 273. King to York, 18 February 1766.

On 21 February 1766 the Stamp Act was repealed by a majority of 108 votes.'[4] Though all looked at an end for the Opposition, the Bedfords and Grenvilles did not readily give up the fight in Parliament. An amendment was proposed by Charles Jenkinson for the Opposition which would insert the words 'explain and amend' for 'repeal' in the bill. This attempt failed.'[5] The opposition tactics carried over into the passage of the Declaratory Act in March 1766. In the Lords, Sandwich attempted to rally support by warning that the Americans were not really concerned with the Stamp Act and its effects in North America, but that their main objective in this endeavour was to see how many concessions they could obtain by resistance. Not many politicians concurred with the Bedfords' view, and on 18 March, George III gave royal assent to the two bills in the House of Lords.'[6]

The failure to prevent the repeal of the Stamp Act signified the end of the Bedfords and Grenvilles' introduction to formal Opposition. Although they did not expect the Rockingham Administration to last, particularly after the death of Cumberland in October, the coalition did recognize the need to coordinate their parliamentary activities, as seen by their meetings in November, December

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'[4] Fortescue, i. 274. Conway to the King, 22 February 1766.
'[5] Fortescue, i. 275. Rockingham to the King, 22 February 1766.
'[6] For a detailed account of the repeal of the Stamp Act see P. D. G. Thomas, British Politics During the Stamp Act Crisis, 185-252.

1765, and January 1766. Their attempts to obtain modification rather than repeal of the Stamp Act provided them with a more moderate role in the political arena, and therefore made them politically palatable to the wavering voters in both Houses. In addition, this position was politically astute since the majority of backbenchers believed that the King himself favoured modification. George III must have remembered the Bedfords and Grenvilles in office, and preferred the Rockingham Ministry. The King was determined to support his saviours as long as they continued to function in office along the lines the Duke of Cumberland had arranged before his demise; no major amendments to personnel or policies would be tolerated. The Rockingham Administration sowed the seeds for its own destruction during the repeal of the Stamp Act, when some leading ministers approached Pitt to join the Ministry.'' The Bedford and Grenville coalition played no active part in their subsequent downfall. Although Sandwich had envisaged the repeal as being a similar trap for the Administration which the Regency Bill had been for the Bedfords and Grenvilles, he never foresaw the approach to Pitt as being the cause of the King's displeasure with the Ministers. The unofficial approach to Pitt at Hayes by Conway and Grafton in January 1766 cost the Rockingham Administration the King's unequivocal support. George thought his trust had been violated and that he was therefore at leisure in

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''R. J. Chaffin, 'The Declaratory Act of 1766: A Reappraisal,' The Historian, 37, 1 (1974). 6.

contemplating a replacement for the Ministry. In any event, the Bedfords and the Grenville supporters, were not considered acceptable replacements by the young King at this point in time.

III. STAYING THE COURSE

Despite their failure to avert the repeal of the Stamp Act, the Opposition remained loosely united during the remainder of the Rockingham Administration. In March 1766, Lord Villiers commented in his journal that:

> Mr. G. Grenville continues closely connected with the D. of Bedford & his Party, and Lord Temple who attends the House...abusing Mr. Pitt as he had done G. Grenville the year before, associates & herds with the Bedford Party, calls Ld. Sandwich, his Friend in the House, makes all his motions of opposition in conjunction with them & applauds most earnestly everything they say.''

The Bedfords were supporting the Grenvilles in both Houses in the Spring of 1766. They did not advocate any issue which the Grenvilles had not proposed. The repeal of the perry and cider tax proposed in March by the government was not opposed, but then this bill's popularity in the west counties made opposition to the repeal inconceivable for any politician.'' There were divisions in the Commons on a Petition from the East India Company to regulate the qualifications of its stockholders on 7 and 17 March, but the Bedfords' position on this issue did not present itself in their correspondence. These divisions related to two petitions from shareholders of the East India Company. The first petition was from the Court of Directors of the Company asking for regulation of proprietors who were splitting their shares into blocks of L500 before Company elections in order to gain control of more votes. The Court

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''Add. MS 47,584, 42.
''Winstanley, Lord Chatham & the Whig Opposition, 36. Commons Journals, xxx. 663.

of Directors asked Parliament to prevent shareholders from voting unless they had held their stock for at least six months. A Bill was ordered to be prepared and presented to the House. This Bill passed the first and second readings without discussion on 27 January and 10 February 1766. On 19 February a second petition from 'interested persons' was presented to the House, and it asked for a provision that those in possession of L2000 or more stock in the East India Company, be given more than one vote. This petition was referred to the Committee of the Whole House which would convene and discuss the Bill. On 7 March, Mr. Kynaston took the chair as the Whole House went into Committee. The amendment for giving proprietors a number of votes in proportion to their interest was defeated 85 to 9.'[10] On 17 March 1766 the Bill for regulating the voters of the East India Company to those who had the shares in their personal possession for at least six months was read a third time. The vote on the motion that this Bill pass was tied 43-43. The Speaker of the House cast his vote with the 'noes' since the Bill could be reconsidered next year.'[11] The Bedfords' stance regarding this East India Company debate was not as adamant as their later stand during the 1767 debate on Lord Chatham's East India Company Dividend Bill, probably because this bill did not affect the Company financially.

'[10]Commons Journals, xxx. 633.
'[11]Commons Journals, xxx. 663.

The main thrust of the Opposition's parliamentary tactics in the spring of 1766 aimed to support each other and to avoid divisions in Parliament which could be construed as solely for opposing the King's Ministers. Undoubtedly, they hoped to minimize the political repercussions of their recent parliamentary failure in the Stamp Act repeal so as to convince their less committed supporters to remain on their side of the House. To that end, they relied heavily on the continuing perception that the Rockingham Ministry could not last in office.

However there were a two issues which did call the Bedfords and Grenvilles into vocal opposition. The introduction of the budget in April 1766 provided for a window tax which Grenville immediately opposed, and the Bedfords who believed Grenville knew more about finance than anyone else in Parliament, followed his lead. The coalition lost the debate over the window tax, but their stand on this financial issue encouraged their 'country' supporters who bore the main burden of payment.'[102] The issue of the illegality of General Warrants, which had been settled by the Courts in 1765, once again was discussed in the Commons in April.'[103] George Grenville attempted to embarrass the

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[102] Commons Journals, xxx. 748-50 & 780. The Bedfords and Grenvilles lost the divisions on the Window Tax 169 to 85 and 130 to 78. The Administration lost 39 votes between the two divisions on 21 April compared to the Opposition who only lost 7 votes. This indicated the strong control the Bedfords and Grenvilles held over their followers.
[103] Langford, 215.

Rockingham Ministry by proposing a bill outlawing the search and seizure of papers.'[104] Although Grenville's motion passed 55 to 16 in the Commons, the Bill died in the House of Lords. Considering the strength of the Bedfords in the Lords, the proposed Bill was not supported wholeheartedly by all the coalition. Possibly Grenville only wished to embarrass the Ministers, and therefore the Bedfords did not think the issue important enough to press for a division in the Lords. This whole episode was rather odd, and the Bedfords' confusion was reflected in Rigby's letter to Bedford on 24 April 1766. In the Commons the day before, William Pitt had made a farewell speech to the Members of the House saying that "...he was going, on account of his health, first to Bath, and then to a place still farther off..."[105] As the House was rising, Pitt rose again and announced his intention on the next day to renew his motion on General Warrants which would extend greatly Grenville's Bill. George Grenville applauded Pitt's comment, and then Sir William Meredith, a Rockingham supporter, responded by attacking Grenville and accusing his brother, Lord Temple, of abetting John Wilkes and the North Briton. Pitt defended Grenville and Temple against this attack, and Grenville disputed Meredith's accusation that Temple had encouraged John Wilkes to write the North Briton. Rigby noted "...to-day your Grace will perceive Pitt and Grenville have joined in a justification of Lord Temple, and have agreed

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[104] Commons Journals, xxx. 822.
[105] Bedford Correspondence, iii. 333-334.

upon a measure, which one shall move and the other second tomorrow."[16] Rigby did not comprehend what the end result of this united family front would be, although he thought that the Ministers were as highly confused by the actions of Pitt, Temple and Grenville as he was. In any event, nothing appeared to come out of the actions of the 'Family'. The Rockingham Administration faced little real threat from the Opposition MPs. The Bedfords remained in the political shadows for most of this spring session and supplied their consistent support for Grenville. The responsibility for opposition by the Coalition was carried by the Grenvilles.

However, in June 1766, the Bedfords returned to the forefront of the political action. They proposed an Amendment to the King's message asking for immediate financial support for his brothers. As early as 31 May the Bedfords had contemplated possible action on this issue when it became known that the Ministry wished to delay this support until the fall of 1766. Rigby noted in a letter to Bedford that

> ...very little news stirring since your Grace left this town; only the difference is said to still subsist between his Majesty and his ministers about the allowance to be settled on the Duke of York and his brothers...there is certainly fine work at court about it; and I will endeavour to make some more in the House of Commons, when it comes there.'[17]

The King's message had asked for a provision for the Princess Caroline Matilda, and the Dukes of York and

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[16] Bedford Correspondence, iii. 334.
[17] Bedford Correspondence, iii. 335-336.

Gloucester. George III asked Parliament to grant the money necessary for a dowry and for the financial support of the Princes. The dowry was passed immediately by the Commons, however the consideration of the Princes' allowances was postponed. The Bedfords attempted to get the allowances settled before Parliament was prorogued, however Rigby wrote to Bedford on 4 June that "(w)e made as bad a figure in numbers as the minority in debate, for we could muster but 37 for the Princes against 109."[108] When the Bedfords finally took an active interest in a Parliamentary Bill, they were disappointed by their numbers. Nonetheless it proved a smart tactical move. By supporting an issue which they thought would please the King, they showed publicly their readiness to re-enter office. They knew the Rockingham Administration was having serious internal problems, and they believed the King was considering a new Ministry.[109]

The Rockingham Administration had passed the American bills, the cider repeal, the window tax and the budget with a majority of at least 37 votes in every division during the spring session.[110] Their record prophesized a stable term in office, particularly with the King's willingness to support them, if they stayed the course set by Cumberland. Yet the Ministry had to contend with several extra-parliamentary

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[108]BEO LIII, 180-83. The vote on 3 June 1766 was lost 109 to 31, and Rigby was one of the tellers, and should have known the correct numbers. Commons Journals, xxx. 842.
[109]PRO 30/29/51. 587-588. Carysfort to Gower, 21 June 1766.
[110]Langford, 219-220.

problems. One was the sentiment that the Rockinghams could not continue as Ministers. This lack of confidence continued to grow among MPs, and was aggravated by the Ministry's mismanagement of the House of Commons. Since Rockingham as the Chief Minister was unable to sit in the Commons, he had to rely on Henry Seymour Conway to manage the government's business. Sadly, Conway was ineffective as House leader.[1] In April the Ministry's problems were compounded by the Duke of Grafton's request to resign his seals of office. Grafton claimed he could not remain a part of a Ministry which did not include William Pitt in any capacity. Although George III persuaded Grafton to delay the public announcement of his intended resignation, the repercussions were immediate in the Cabinet.[2] Pitt had created problems in the Rockingham Ministry ever since his speech in the Commons on the repeal of the Stamp Act in January 1766. There had been several approaches to Pitt made by members of the Administration, Grafton and Conway in particular, frequently without George III or Rockingham's approval. The Marquis and the King grew weary of these unnecessary approaches to Pitt by these Ministers, but what to do with them was a perplexing question for them both.

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[1] Langford, 221. Conway was ill for two months during the Spring session, and William Dowdeswell was his replacement for the months of March and April 1766.

[2] Fortescue, i. 295. King to Lord Chancellor, 28 April 1766.

On 3 May, George III contacted Bute by letter to find out whether he could create a Ministry to replace the Rockinghams since he thought that the approaches to Pitt had broken any obligation he felt towards the Administration created by his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland. Pitt and Grenville were to be excluded from consideration.'[113] Pitt was excluded because of his past record of refusing office without Temple, and Grenville because his past performances in the Closet created a personal animosity between the King and Grenville. George III did not want to be bound over to the Grenvilles and Pitt because their combined strengths would make it impossible for him to evade their demands while in office. He worried about this 'Family' becoming Masters not only of Parliament, but of himself. Lord Bute cast about for possible contenders for a new Administration until 21 June 1766. At that time, John Proby, 1st Baron Carysfort, a Bedfordite, wrote to Lord Gower that 'a very worthy and sensible friend' had indicated that Bute

> ...desired to ally himself with those who would neither proscribe his Friends nor threaten him with the Block; and that the Crown was not to be taken by storm...Bute would freely and totally renounce all pretensions to power and only wished that his friend [George III] might be honourably taken care of.'[114]

The reaction, if any, by the Bedfords to this veiled invitation was not noted in any of the Bedford correspondence. Bute had failed the King for the last time, and George III returned to coddling Rockingham in order to

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[113]J. Brooke, King George III, 132-133.
[114]PRO 30/29/51. 587-588. Carysfort to Gower, 21 June 1766.

keep the Administration intact until the end of the session, when he would have more time to contemplate replacing them. This minor episode was interesting in light of Bute's earlier approach to Bedford in January and February 1766. Although there is no evidence suggesting that George III had formally asked Bute to create a new Administration, Bute and the King had re-commenced their confidential correspondence in early January 1766.'''[5] Rockingham and his Ministers were bickering over Pitt's entrance into the Administration. The King preferred modification rather than repeal of the Stamp Act as Rockingham had advocated. It was only when Bedford made it plain that Grenville and he would only consider acting together and continuing the same policies they were pursuing before their dismissal in July 1765, that the King and Bute dropped the idea of inviting the Bedfords back into office.'''[6]

Amid the confusion after Grafton's resignation in late April 1766, Northington, the Lord Chancellor, threatened to resign his seals unless the Ministry acquired Pitt. He believed that stablization of the Administration would occur only with Pitt's accession to office. Northington was also considering the fact that Rockingham ultimately intended to replace him with Charles Yorke, and therefore would lose nothing by courting favour with Pitt. The King despaired of ever finding a solution to this political mess, however

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'''[5]Brooke, King George III, 127.
'''[6]Bedford Correspondence, iii. 328.

William Pitt rode to George III's rescue. He let it be known through his friend, Chief Justice Camden, and through the King's agent, Northington, that he would be willing to create an Administration 'of the best of all party's and an exclusion to no descriptions;, and that he would be willing to do so without Lord Temple or George Grenville.'[17] The fear that George III would be held hostage by the combination of Pitt, Grenville and Temple, was allayed by this announcement. On 6 July plans for the change of Ministry were set in motion, and the King was cheered by a letter from Pitt announcing that

> I shall hasten to London, as fast as I possibly can; happy could I change infirmity into wings of expedition, the sooner to be permitted the high honour to lay at your Majesty's feet the poor but sincere offering of the small services of your Majesty's most dutiful subject and most devoted servant.'[18]

On 12 July Pitt had his first audience of George III, and expressed his desire for the Treasury to be offered to Lord Temple. However if Temple declined the office, Pitt would find someone else to fill the position. George III did not hold out much hope that Temple would accept the offer, but called Temple to London for an audience on 17 July 1766. Grenville had written to Bedford about this planned meeting on 15 July,[19] and Temple informed Gower by a letter dated the same day.'[20]

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[17] Brooke, Chatham Administration, 3.
[18] Fortescue, i. 368.
[19] Bedford Correspondence, iii. 340-341.
[20] PRO 30/29/52. 589-590. Temple to Gower, 15 July 1766.

On 18 July Temple returned to Stowe and immediately advised Grenville about the events which passed in London. Temple had declined the office because

> the intended basis of the new, virtuous, and patriotic administration is to be the rump of the last, strengthened by the particular friends of Mr. Pitt...I might have stood a capital cypher surrounded with cyphers of a different complexion the whole under the guidance of that great luminary, the great commoner.'[21]

Temple had asked for a position for Lord Lyttleton, a follower of Grenville, and for Lord Gower, a Bedford, and although Lyttleton was acceptable, Gower would not be considered by Pitt but he gave no reason for the rejection. The negotiation with Temple ended, and the Grenville coalition with the Bedfords was as strong as it had ever been since July 1765. William Pitt kissed hands on 30 July for the Privy Seal and for his peerage as Earl of Chatham. This new ministerial arrangement appeared to the public and to the MPs as more stable than the recent Rockingham Ministry. The Bedfords and Grenvilles could no longer rely on the sentiment that the Ministry was unstable, and had to work out a new approach for their Opposition.

Meanwhile, Chatham was determined to build an Administration without regard to party distinctions. When Lord Egmont resigned as First Lord of the Admiralty in August 1766, Chatham commissioned Grafton to offer Gower the position.'[22] Obviously Gower and the Bedfords were not

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[21]Add. MS 42,084, 93-94. Temple to Grenville, 18 July 1766.
[22]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 13.

individually outlawed by Chatham. Gower's earlier rejection when proposed by Temple was probably a ploy by Chatham to retain total control over the Ministry by not allowing any one person to have more than one political nominee. The Earl of Chatham would not countenance the existence of party distinction in his Ministry, and therefore individuals from parties could enter unattached. The approach to Gower was made through the Marquis of Tavistock, the Duke of Bedford's son. Grafton approached him in London and asked him to determine his father's views towards the Chatham Ministry, and to ask whether Gower would be willing to take the Admiralty post. Upon receiving this information, Bedford immediately conveyed the information to Gower, and advised Grafton by letter that he would not be the arbitrator in this transaction.'[123] On 21 August Grafton wrote directly to Gower advising him of the Administration's intention to formulate a Ministry on the principles of conciliation and unity, and asking Gower to accept the Admiralty seat.'[124] On 22 August Gower declined office in a letter which explained that "...your Grace must know how unpleasant it is to be in a responsible office...unconnected with the individuals who compose that Administration..."'[125] Gower immediately informed his political friends of his rejection of this offer.

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[123] Bedford Correspondence, iii. 342-343. Bedford to Grafton, 17 August 1766.
[124] PRO 30/29/55. 597-598. Grafton to Gower, 21 August 1766.
[125] Grafton, Autobiography, 100-101.

Although this offer to Gower would have been an opening into the Chatham Administration for the Bedfords at a time when remaining in Opposition appeared bleak, Gower and the Bedfords realized that Chatham was sincere in his attempt to create a broad-bottom Administration without reference to party. They refused the offer because they would not countenance returning to office without acceptance of their political ties. The Bedfords also believed that Chatham and Grafton wanted to split the Bedfords and Grenvilles. The Bedfords "...intimated to Chatham that he must take them all, or that he should get none of them. The event proved that they were wiser in their generation than any other connection in the state."[124] This episode illustrated the Bedfords' personal loyalty to each other in the political arena. Whether they believed that they could obtain a better deal as a group rather than as individuals is unknown, but they were not ready to sell their party's support for one place in the Administration at this point in time.

After the events of August, the Bedfords settled into a neutral political position. They did not plan any type of concerted parliamentary action with their cohorts, the Grenvilles, for the fall session which would commence 11 November 1766. On 31 August Bedford notified John Campbell, Marquis of Lorne, one of his followers, that it was unnecessary for him to come to Parliament for "I know of no

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[124]Hillard, 109.

Plan formed, or any resolution come to, for the part to be taken at the ensuing session."[127] Bedford himself decided to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude towards Chatham's Administration since that Ministry had not pursued any measures contrary to the Bedfords' policies since taking office, and since Parliament had been prorogued on 12 July until 11 November, the Bedfords did not want to oppose openly the new Administration without good reason. The backbenchers' attitudes towards opposition still played a major consideration for politicians in the 1760s. Despite Gower's refusal of office in August, the Bedfords were Chatham's prime candidates for office, because he believed that they would support his Ministry if one or two plums were tossed in their direction. Chatham saw the Bedfords as a faction which could be split by self-interest, and then used to support his broad-bottom Administration. The Bedfords were aware of their intrinsic value to the Administration, and did not attempt to dissuade Chatham's approaches. During late October, contemporaries noted that the Bedfords were straying from their coalition with the Grenvilles.[128]

Bedford was taking stock of his political strengths and weaknesses in early October. Rigby contacted their Scottish connection and found that "...no Englishman (meaning

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[127]BEO LIV, Bedford to Lorne, 31 August 1766.
[128]Walpole Correspondence, xxii. 461-462. Walpole to Mann, 26 October 1766.

Bedford) from the Revolution to this day ever had so many personal friends in Parliament from that Kingdom..."[129] The Bedfords were fully aware of their political strengths, and this had an influence on their negotiations with Chatham in November and December 1766. Chatham was already conscious of the strength of the Bedfords in both Houses, and he wanted their support for his Administration, but Chatham would not countenance party, and the Bedfords would not be considered as anything but a party. Without notifying the King or other members of his Administration, Chatham commissioned Lord Northington, Lord President, to ferret out information about the Duke of Bedford's attitude towards entering the Ministry.[130] On 19 October Bedford visited Northington at his residence in Bath. Northington, who had been the Lord Chancellor in the Grenville Ministry, expressed his wish to see the Bedfords in the Administration since they were necessary to provide it with stability. After Northington had outlined Lord Chatham's policies, Bedford replied "...that we would not derogate from those measures we had approved whilst in power, and supported since we were out..."[131] This comment referred specifically to their American position, and was an indication of their wish to appear publicly consistent on the important issues. Northington conferred with Chatham at Bath while Bedford related the events to Lord Weymouth at Longleat during the

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[129]BEO LIV, 80-82. Rigby to Bedford, 14 October 1766.
[130]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 39.
[131]Bedford Journal, 591-592. Brooke, Chatham Administration, 39.

next two days. On 24 October the Earl of Chatham visited Bedford where he "proceeded to express his desire that I and my friends would take hands with Administration; and recapitulated, with regard to measures, all that Lord Northington had said; but in a fuller manner."[132] These proposed measures included:

> (1)the maintenance of peace on the continent, "...but that there was a great cloud of power in the north,...(and)...that the fleet must not be neglected;..."[133];
> (2)the subordination of America;
> (3)and, the sustenance of the militia.[134]

Bedford carefully reiterated his response to Northington, and the negotiation stalled for one week. On 31 October Bedford, with Gower, Weymouth and Rigby's approval, asked for an interview with Chatham which occurred at 8:30 p.m. the same day. Bedford recapitulated the measures Chatham had proposed to follow and after Chatham agreed that they were true, the Duke supplied the party's conditions for support. Gower, Weymouth and Rigby were to be given appropriate employments. The Duke of Marlborough was to be promised the first Garter; and Thomas Brand was to be promised a peerage. Chatham lamented the lack of vacancies in the Ministry, and since no one could be removed if the image of a 'broad-bottomed administration' was to be maintained, the positions vacated by resignations were all that he could offer the Bedfords. Earl Gower could be Master of the Horse,

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[132] Bedford Journal, 592.
[133] Bedford Journal, 592. Brooke, Chatham Administration, 39-40.
[134] Bedford Journal, 592.

Weymouth would be made a joint postmaster, and Rigby might be considered for his old place or some equivalent position when one turned up. Brand and Marlborough could receive no guarantee. After this information had been forwarded to Gower, Weymouth and Rigby, the unanimous opinion was "...that they must wait till the Bottom should be enlarged."[133]

Chatham arrived at Bedford's Bath residence shortly after breakfast on 1 November. Although he was disappointed with Bedford's refusal, Chatham asked when Bedford would be in London, and they parted on cordial terms. On 2 November Rigby advised Bedford that "...you will hear again from the man mountain before the day the Parliament meets; and I intend in the mean time to see my Lord Chancellor [Camden] & discourse him upon the same subject..."[134] The Bedfords had not given up on the possibility of re-entering the Administration, particularly if they could negotiate for promises for at least three to five followers.

When Bedford arrived in London on 9 November, George Grenville visited him immediately at Bedford House. Bedford noted in his journal: "I told him of the interviews betwixt Lord Chatham and me at Bath; but did not enter into the

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[133]Bedford Journal, 593. BEO LIV, 72-73. Results of the Answer to be given by me, to the Earl of Chatham, in Relation to the Proposals made by His Lordship to me, on the Preceeding Evening at His House, 1 November 1766.
[134]BEO LIV, 96-98. Rigby to Bedford, 2 November 1766.

particulars..."[137] Grenville advised Bedford of his intention to oppose the Address on 11 November. Bedford replied that his Friends would not oppose. The next day Grenville notified Temple of Bedford's differing sentiments about public business.[138] The opposition coalition was no longer united. Although their separation had not been formal, the Bedfords had indicated their weariness of opposition as early as March 1766. They had no policy or principle which they vehemently wished to uphold in Parliament once the Stamp Act had been repealed. As long as the Administration practised financial restraint, avoided war in Europe, and attempted to restrain the American colonists from riotous behaviour, the Bedfords had no issue to rally around. Throughout the summer of 1766 they remained in contact with Grenville and Temple, but their correspondence did not discuss plans for political Opposition in the fall session. By 11 November the Bedfords had withdrawn their parliamentary support from the Grenvilles. The Bedfords did not openly show their support for the Administration, but they did not vote in divisions. They also avoided participation at functions which carried political overtones. On 11 November 1766 the King expressed his surprise that the Bedford party did not appear at the Duke of Grafton's residence on 10 November to discuss the King's Address before its presentation on 11 November to

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[137] Bedford Journal, 593.
[138] Add. MS 42,084, 200-201. Grenville to Temple, 10 November 1766.

Parliament.'[139] But the Bedfords did not want to show public support for the Ministry when their negotiations were unsettled. Contemporaries noted that the fall session was inactive because the Duke of Bedford and his party did not appear in Parliament. The Bedfords were seen to have abandoned Grenville and proceeded to "...openly advertise[d] themselves on sale."[140] The King fully expected the Bedfords to support the Administration while they were openly bargaining for positions with Chatham, but the Bedfords wished to avoid openly supporting the Ministry until the bargain had been struck to the satisfaction of both parties. This was an astute political maneuver. Potential embarrassment was minimized if the negotiations failed and they had to return to Opposition. Seduction of party members by the Administration was also allayed by this action.

The King's Address opening the winter session dealt with the problems of high wheat prices, the defective grain harvest and the merchants' demands for the export of grain. George III announced a corn embargo which had been recommended by Chatham and his councillors, 26 September 1766. Immediately the question of the legality of this measure, particularly the legality of instituting an embargo by this method, was raised by MPs in the Commons. The Bedfords did not take a policy stand on this issue, and they

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[139]Fortescue, i. 413. King to Grafton, 11 November 1766.
[140]Walpole, Correspondence , xxii. 463. Walpole to Mann, 13 November 1766.

avoided commitment by not dividing.'[41]

The Duke of Bedford remained in London, but his activities until the end of November were apolitical. He dined with friends, he attended the King's levees, he went to the opera, and he returned to Woburn Abbey on 19 November.'[42] Therefore the role of the Bedfords in the storm over Lord Edgcumbe's dismissal was minimal, although they hoped to profit by it. Edgcumbe was removed from his post as Treasurer of the Household in favour of John Shelley, a nephew of the Duke of Newcastle and a political opportunist. Lord Edgcumbe was a friend of the late Duke of Devonshire who had also been General Conway's patron. Conway did not object to Edgcumbe's replacement if he was offered a suitable replacement position in the Administration. Chatham offered Edgcumbe the post of Lord of the Bedchamber, a position with a lower status and a decrease in salary. Lord Edgcumbe refused to accept this offer, and on 17 November Chatham dismissed him outright. Conway protested his dismissal and threatened his own resignation. Conway never followed through with this threat. The Rockinghams decided on 19 November to withdraw their support from the Administration because of Edgcumbe's treatment. And on 27 November, seven of the Rockinghams, but not Conway, in the

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'[41]Parliamentary History, xvi. 245-250. Bedford Journal, 593-594. For more details about the Corn Embargo and the political crisis surrounding it, see P. Lawson, 'Parliament, the Constitution and Corn: The Corn Embargo Crisis of 1766'.
'[42]Bedford Journal, 595.

Ministry resigned.'[43]

The resignation of the Rockinghams did not destroy the Chatham Administration, but it did strengthen the Bedfords' bargaining position. Chatham met with Earl Gower on 27 November, and in turn, Gower conveyed Chatham's message to the Duke of Bedford at Woburn on 28 November.'[44] The terms were similar to those Chatham and Bedford had discussed earlier in October.'[45] The major difference was that Gower, Weymouth and Rigby would obtain their positions almost immediately rather than being forced to wait for resignations. Bedford and Gower thought the offer of three places was a good opportunity for the party to enter into a negotiation with honour.'[46] Edmund Burke, the Marquis of Rockingham's secretary, wrote to Charles O'Hara on 29 November that the Bedfords

> ...must be mad to refuse the offers that are now made them. Lord Chatham has in a manner surrendered prisoner at discretion to that party;...The grand difficulty made by the Bedfords is about G. Grenville; but they will abandon him, at least for a time; not that they will wholly do it; for they have nobody to lead the House of Commons who is so near their party or their principles..."'[47]

But the Bedfords did not accept Chatham's offer of offices. The Bedfords, who had given indications of their desire to enter office during the summer, were not overly anxious to

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'[43]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 52-58.
'[44]Fortescue, i. 417. Chatham to the King, 27 November 1766.
'[45]Bedford Correspondence, iii. 355-356.
'[46]Bedford Correspondence, iii. 355-356. Bedford to Marlborough, 29 November 1766.
'[47]Burke Correspondence, i. 282-283. Burke to O'hara, (29) November (1766). Hoffman, 141.

accept simply anything during this transaction. This was an obvious political tactic, and the King noted that among the Bedfords "...there is an air of more reserve than appears necessary."[148] Lord Charles Spencer, a Bedford, had been offered the post of the Comptroller's staff in order to appease his brother, the Duke of Marlborough, for only receiving assurance of a Garter sometime in the future. Spencer declined the post on Sunday, 30 November 1766. He advised Bedford that

> ...though I really think your friends are the more likely of any set of men in the Kingdom to form a durable Ministry yet I cannot help thinking that Angels from Heaven are not likely to keep in a twelvemonth as things are now..."[149]

Spencer felt that his costs of re-election after the appointment would not be recoverable if he took this post.[150]

Spencer's refusal did not decide the Duke of Bedford's actions during the next two days, but it illustrated that not all Bedford supporters were anxious to enter the Chatham Ministry. Therefore when Sir Edward Hawke was appointed at the beginning of December by Chatham to head the Admiralty without the Bedfords' prior knowledge, the negotiations were

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[148] Fortescue, i. 418. Chatham Correspondence, iii. 135. King to Chatham, 29 November 1766.
[149] BEO LIV, 120-122. Spencer to Bedford, 30 November 1766.
[150] Brooke, Chatham Administration, 64. In the mid-eighteenth century, if an MP accepted an appointment from the King, he must resign his seat, and seek re-election. Although re-election was likely, it was also costly, and Spencer did not think this post offered by this Administration would recover the funds he would need to spend.

finished. The formality of negotiation continued, but the Duke of Bedford at his meeting with Chatham at 7 p.m. on 1 December 1766, made demands which he knew Chatham would never accept. Bedford attempted to include as many of his friends as possible in his request. He hoped to stave off jealousy and desertions of party members since he recognized that he would not be distributing administration patronage in the near future. Bedford's precis of the meeting recapitulated their discussion, and he listed his demands carefully. Lord Gower was to be Master of the Horse, Lord Weymouth, one of the Postmasters, Mr. Rigby, Cofferer, the Duke of Marlborough to receive the next garter after the Duke of Cumberland, Mr. Thomas Brand and Lord Lorne to receive peerages whenever any new peers should be made, Mr. Thynne was to be given immediate employment, the Earl of Essex and Mr. Keck to be reinstated in their former posts, Mr. Vernon and Mr. Neville, in addition to the remainder of those dismissed in 1765, were to be considered for employment, Lord Tavistock to be called to the House of Lords, and Lord Sandwich and Lord Scarsdale to be considered for important positions in the near future.'[151] Bedford was not surprised when Chatham arrived at Bedford House on 2 December to advise that the King would not agree to these terms, and that the negotiations were formally at an end.'[152]

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[151]BEO LIV, 132-133. Precis of conversation between Chatham and Bedford, 1 December 1766.

[152]See Fortescue, i. 419-422. On 2 December 1766 Chatham advised the King that the Duke of Bedford was pleased with the King's offer to call his son, Lord Tavistock, into the House of Lords, but that circumstances prohibited acceptance

George III noted in a letter to Chatham the same day that he was "...glad his (Bedford's) behaviour was proper, as it gives me the strongest reason to judge that the difficulties he has made have not originated in his mind, but are owing to others."[153] Nothing in the Duke of Bedford's actions throughout this negotiation would suggest that he was under the influence of others. In fact his diary and letters suggested the opposite to be true which was expected in a man of Bedford's stature. Bedford formulated his own ideas about issues, but then he asked others for their opinion and only then amended his ideas if he thought it appropriate. This was a sensible approach since the party was comprised of many peers who considered themselves near equals to Bedford in social and political stature. An indication of this approach to managing the party was seen in his journal entry of 31 October 1766. Regarding Chatham's offer of offices, Bedford noted that he would report it to his friends, "...which I did accordingly, on my return to my own house, without giving them any opinion of what I wished they should do."[154] After Weymouth, Gower and Rigby had thought on the matter, they advised Bedford to wait longer for a better offer. This concurred with Bedford's private opinion, and with the attitude towards entering office proffered in the past by the party.

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[152](cont'd) of the offer. This indicated that Bedford was not the covetous politician he was frequently depicted to be by his political opponents and later historians.

[153]Fortescue, i. 422. Chatham Correspondence, iii. 138. The King to Chatham, 2 December 1766.

[154]Bedford Journal, 593.

Having ended all negotiations with Chatham to enter office, the Bedfords rejoined the Opposition. Although the formal negotiations ended on 2 December, Rigby had written to George Grenville at 10:30 p.m. on 1 December 1766 indicating that he would not differ from Grenville on public measures in the future. George Grenville replied to Rigby at midnight 1 December "Your note which I have this moment found here surprises me. I am impatient to see you. Shall it be at your house or mine, & when?"[155] Grenville appeared to be more than willing to welcome back the Bedfords into Opposition.

The Bedfords weathered their failure to enter office quite well. The dissatisfaction of their followers was minimal. A letter from Lord Halifax chastized Bedford for not putting forward his name as a prerequisite before accepting office, but Bedford replied that mentioning Halifax's name in the negotiations would have been useless since "...nothing was farther from that Minister's intention than the reinstating in power, that Administration, which had been dismissed in July 1765."[156] Halifax appeared satisfied by Bedford's response. Another personnel problem arose when John Campbell, Marquis of Lorne, applied directly to Chatham for a British peerage and kissed hands to become

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[155]Add. MS 42,084, 217-220. Rigby to Grenville & Grenville to Rigby, 1 December 1766.
[156]BEO LIV, 164-166. Halifax to Bedford, 14 December 1766. Bedford to Halifax, 17 December 1766.

Baron Sunbridge on 17 December 1766.[157] Thomas Brand, for whom Bedford had earlier obtained a promise from the King for a peerage at the next creation of peers, asked Bedford if he should remind Chatham of the King's promise. Bedford discouraged Brand. Chatham had retaliated against the Bedfords for their obstinancy during the last set of negotiations by enticing one of their followers into the government's arms. In addition, on 29 December 1766 the Duke of Marlborough wrote to Bedford that John Stewart, Viscount Garlies, had advised him that "...he will be thoroughly attached to me if I promise to make a point of his having a peerage; if not, that he must try elsewhere for it."[158] Bedford was not very diplomatic in his response. He noted that Lord Lorne's peerage disgusted him and he advised Marlborough to avoid embarrassing himself by suggesting that Garlies follow Lorne's example.[159] Chatham had caused some jealousy in the Bedford party by giving Lorne his English peerage, but Bedford was able to quell the jealousies of Brand without losing his vote. The Scottish peer, Garlies, went over to the government's side in an unsuccessful attempt to gain a second English peerage.

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[157]Namier & Brooke, ii. 189.
[158]Cited in Namier & Brooke, iii. 482.
[159]BEO LIV, 192-194. Bedford to Marlborough, 31 December 1766. Cited in Namier & Brooke, iii. 482. Garlies failed in his approach to Chatham, and ultimately returned to support the Bedfords in 1768.

IV. RIDING OUT THE STORM

The concept of a united opposition had been suggested as early as November 1766 but Bedford's negotiation with the Chatham Administration suspended this idea until after the Christmas recess in December 1766.[160] In the early months of 1767 the idea of a coalition of opposition MPs grew, particularly after their strong showing in February when the estimates for the army were debated in the House of Commons on 18 February, and when the land tax was reduced on 27 February. The East India Company inquiry proposed by Chatham which the Opposition construed as a violation of the rights of private property was denounced by all three leaders of the groups in the Minority, but any long-lasting unification of the Bedfords, Grenvilles and Rockinghams did not occur in the spring of 1767. The lack of communication and trust between the leaders of the three parties was a disruptive factor, but the goal of office nearly united the parties in July. The Bedfords and Rockinghams attempted a plan for entering office, but ultimately could not agree on the personnel to be included in the projected Ministry. The negotiation broke off, and the Chatham Administration remained securely in office. The Bedfords were frustrated by these failed attempts to reconcile the Marquis of Rockingham with George Grenville to create an Opposition which could form an Administration. This had been their desire ever since Chatham had disappointed them in November and December

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[160]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 79.

1766. The Opposition could have provided a viable Ministerial alternative, if they were united. But by November 1767 when George Grenville attacked the Rockinghams' American policy in the Commons, the Duke of Bedford realized that these two would never be able to enter office together. The Bedfords were tired of opposition, the Duke himself was facing a cataract operation in early December, and the Opposition was fractured. Bedford could place a number of his friends into the Administration without compromising the party's views on America, and the potential loss of party members would be alleviated. The Bedfords would also be well placed in government in time for the 1768 general election. Finally, by entering into office at this time, the Bedfords would be able to attain an equal position with the incumbents in the Ministry. Rockingham and Chatham's proposals had always relegated the Bedfords to a minor position within any Ministry, but Grafton offered them equality, if not supremacy, and the Bedfords seized the opportunity.

The opportunity to create a united opposition in early 1767 was within the grasp of the Bedfords, Grenvilles and Rockinghams. The Bedfords had rejoined Grenville in December after they had rejected Chatham's offer to enter the government. Richard Rigby had contacted Grenville before the official negotiations were formally ended on 2 December 1766, and Grenville welcomed his friends back into the fold.

On 18 February 1767 the Bedfords showed their support of Grenville during the debate on the estimates for the army. Grenville's motion for an address to the King for lessening the country's expenses in America by withdrawing the troops from the frontiers and forts was supported by the Bedfords. "The numbers were 62 to 139, the most powerful minority that has yet appeared, especially considering that few of the Rockinghams voted."[161] Grenville and Rigby spoke together on the Minority side, and their alliance was strengthened by the debate in the House nine days later.

On 27 February the proposal to reduced the land tax from 4 to 3 shillings per pound was introduced by William Dowdeswell, a Rockingham, and suprisingly passed 206 to 186.[162] The country gentlemen in Parliament applauded this resolution to reduce the land tax. The popularity of this motion helped the three parties to defeat the Administration in the House of Commons, and although the Administration was never expected to resign in light of this defeat, the Opposition was overjoyed with its triumph. The lesson that the Opposition could bring down the Administration if only it was united on an issue, was pointedly illustrated.[163]

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[161]Cited in Bedford Journal, 598n, Fortescue, i. 453. Conway to the King. 24 February 1767. Conway advised the King that Grenville's motion was defeated 132 to 67. Walpole, Memoirs, 296. Walpole noted that the motion was rejected 131 to 67.
[162]Fortescue, i. 453-454. Conway to the King. 27 February 1767. Lawson. "Faction in Politics:..." 23-24. Bedford Journal, 599. Bedford noted the bill passed 206 to 188.
[163]Frank O'Gorman, The Rise of Party in England, 200. Hoffman, 149. Add. MS 32,980, 178. Division on the Land Tax, 27 February 1767.

Attempts to unite the Opposition proceeded apace during the East India Company Inquiry. The Chatham Administration scrutinized the Company as early as 28 August 1766 when Chatham saw the political and financial expediency in the Crown obtaining the property rights and revenue from the Company's territorial acquisitions in Bengal. Chatham thought the government could use the Company's revenue to alleviate the land tax burden in England. William Beckford, MP and London alderman, introduced the inquiry in the House of Commons on 25 November 1766. As Chatham's personal choice for the leadership of this debate, Beckford moved for an inquiry into the East India Company, and the vote was easily carried, 129 to 76.'[44] Edward Thurlow and Richard Rigby spoke for the Bedfords against this motion, and joined the followers of Grenville and Rockingham in opposing it. This was unexpected by Chatham since the Edgcumbe affair was an embryo, and the Rockingham party was expected to support the Administration. The Bedfords on the other hand, were negotiating for office, and so were expected to support the Ministry or remain neutral in divisions. The Grenvilles were expected by the Ministry to oppose the motion.

On 9 December Beckford presented a motion calling for the East India Company papers to be presented to the House of Commons. Conway, the Northern Secretary of State, and Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, threatened to

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'[44]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 75.

resign over the motion since they did not wish the Company's financial records to be discussed in the Commons. The Duke of Grafton was able to dissuade them from taking this step, and the papers were laid before the Commons prior to adjournment until 22 January 1767. The Cabinet was strained, and after the failure of Chatham's negotiations with the Bedfords, was vulnerable to Opposition attacks. The Rockinghams vaguely recognized this, and seriously considered an organized Opposition with the Bedfords and Grenvilles. The Bedfords were the key in these considerations because the idea of association with George Grenville was personally distasteful to the Marquis of Rockingham. Union with the Bedfords was palatable simply because the Bedfords had no serious candidate for the Treasury and for the leadership of the Commons, even though they advocated colonial policies similar to Grenville's American proposals. But the Bedfords rejoined Grenville after the end of their negotiations with Chatham, and so Rockingham fretted that the Bedfords would demand Grenville's return to the Treasury, which he would never countenance. Therefore the Rockinghams never seriously pursued a unified opposition in December and January. The Bedfords never considered uniting with the Rockinghams. They had rejoined their cohort Grenville in December, but with Parliament adjourned until 22 January 1767, there was no public showing of their mutual support. It was only after the success of the land tax reduction in February that Rigby

tried to coordinate opposition efforts with Grenville and Rockingham. These efforts were successful during the debate on the East India Company Dividends in the spring of 1767.

The debate on this inquiry was postponed several times by the Cabinet for various practical and ideological reasons during this Spring session. One major problem for the Ministry was Chatham's continuing illness and absence from the House. The Opposition plotted to defeat the Ministers once again in this session, and the East India Company debate provided the opportunity. However on 6 March 1767 when William Beckford moved that the Company's papers be laid before the House and printed, the Opposition missed their opportunity and did not force a division on the question.'[65] The next day, Rigby and Grenville regretted not opposing Beckford's motion, and Rockingham came to the same conclusion. Arrangements were made for a petition from the East India Company to be presented to the House of Commons against the printing of their papers for security reasons. On 9 March Dowdeswell moved that the order for the printing of these papers be revoked, and he was supported by the Bedfords, the Grenvilles, and his own supporters, the

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[65]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 110-116. Brooke details this event and argues that the Opposition missed their best opportunity for defeating and destroying the Chatham Administration. Chatham was bed-ridden, and Conway and Townshend were both opposed to the Inquiry. They had agreed to neither support nor oppose the motion in the House. Therefore, if the Opposition had pushed the issue to a division, the Administration could have been defeated and in all likelihood, brought down.

Rockinghams. Townshend was not in the House, and Conway moved that the debate be adjourned until 11 March since the Administration had no advance warning of this petition and would need to study it. His motion carried 180 to 147.'[16] The Bedfords, Grenvilles and Rockinghams agreed to continue their efforts on the 11th, but were disappointed when the Ministers conceded to the Company's petition, and amended the order for printing of the papers without facing a further division. The Inquiry would begin on 20 March without the papers being printed for the MPs.

Sadly, on 22 March 1767, Lord Tavistock, the Duke's son, was killed in a fall from his horse during a hunt. Tavistock's death in mid-March immobilized the Duke's political activities for several weeks.'[17] The Duke's immobilization threw the responsibility for political

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'[16]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 115.

'[17]Bedford Journal , 600-601. The Duke did not write in his journal from 9 March until 10 April 1767. Until 13 May his entries indicated that he spent a great deal of his time visiting and consoling Lady Tavistock, his daughter-in-law. Walpole in his Memoirs, (312-314), noted the personal censure of the Duke of Bedford for his behaviour during this period of mourning which Junius had initiated in 1769 (See John Cannon, ed., Letters of Junius, 116-125. Junius to Bedford, 19 September 1769.) Junius' accusation that the Duke acted with cold-hearted avarice immediately after his son's death has continued to be quoted despite the lack of evidence to support this claim. According to his journal, the Duke of Bedford did not cold-heartedly ignore his daughter-in-law or grandson to devote his time to the whirlwind of politics at Westminster. He spent a great deal of time with them, and he also provided for their financial care. The Duke and Duchess did not sell off their son's personal effects and pocket the money. They apparently sold off Tavistock's clothes and personal effects and gave the money to Tavistock's personal servants.

activities onto the shoulders of the other leaders in Parliament, and the negotiations for a united opposition were placed in abeyance for a short time.[166] By 23 March the prospect of creating a junction again appeared favourable. Lord Lyttelton, a Grenvillian, provided Temple and Grenville with an outline of an Administration "...to be formed if Lord Chatham should go out by a coalition of the Grenvilles with the Rockinghams and Bedfords..."[167] In this outline Grenville was to have the Treasury, Rockingham or Newcastle were to have the Lord Privy Seal. The Bedfords were provided with three appointments. Lord Sandwich or Earl Gower was to be Secretary of State for the Northern Department, Lord Weymouth was to be Master of the Horse, and Lord Suffolk to be First Commissioner of Trade.[170] Their position within the proposed Ministry would be no better than the prospect offered earlier in 1766 by Chatham. The Rockinghams were as enthusiastic about the prospect of a united opposition. Rockingham advised Newcastle on 26 March that "...our great object should be to have the most perfect and cordial union with the Duke of Bedford's friends..."[171] Burke noted "...that black blood is over between us; and that our people and they (Bedfords) meet and talk amicably.

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[166] Burke Correspondence, i. 300-301. Burke to O'Hara. 17 March 1767.
[167] Add. MS 42,085. 11. 23 March 1767.
[170] The association by Lyttelton that Henry Howard, 12th Earl of Suffolk was a Bedford was ludicrous. He was by all appearances a strong supporter of George Grenville. The Bedfords were actually considered for only two spots.
[171] Add. MS 32,980. 384-385. Rockingham to Newcastle, 26 March 1767.

Something may come of it."[172] However the problem which arose continually during discussions by the Rockinghams for a junction of the Opposition related to George Grenville and his brother, Lord Temple. After a meeting on 27 March 1767, Rockingham wrote to Newcastle "...that G. Grenville and Lord Temple will increase the difficulties of any plan being formed..."[173] On the same day, Lord Albemarle warned Newcastle that "...Lord Temple will overturn this negotiation, this wished for union, as he has done all others..."[174] Temple and Grenville were not trusted by the Rockinghams.

Even though the Rockinghams openly avowed their wariness of the Grenvilles, the Bedfords continued their wholehearted support of the two brothers. Nonetheless they were willing to negotiate on the exact positions the two would hold in any Ministry. Richard Rigby who was attending to the negotiations for the Duke advised the Rockinghams that if the Grenvilles were forced to make concessions with regard to appointments, then the Rockinghams must be willing to do the same. The Bedfords stressed that the three parties had to act as 'equals' and 'partners' in any plan.[175] Their demand should have warned the Rockinghams that the Bedfords

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[172] Burke Correspondence, i. 301-302. Burke to O'Hara, 28 March 1767.
[173] Add. MS 32,980. 418-419. Rockingham to Newcastle, 29 March 1767.
[174] Add. MS 32,980. 422. Albemarle to Newcastle, 29 March 1767.
[175] Add. MS 32,980. 406-413. Substance of a Conversation this Day with Mr. Rigby, 28 March 1767.

perceived themselves as equal partners in their relationship. Although their party was smaller in the House of Commons, their strength in the Lords, and their courtship by the Administration, put the Bedfords, at least in their own eyes, on an equal footing with the Grenvilles and the Rockinghams. In addition, these negotiations were to create a new Administration, not patch up an old one, and therefore all three parties wanted to obtain positions favourable to their followers. The Rockinghams did not recognize that the Bedfords demanded political equality, and if treated as equals, they would arbitrate in negotiations on the role Grenville and Temple would play in the projected Administration. On 31 March Rockingham insisted on having the majority of nominees in the Cabinet, and on having the whole care of the West Indies and North America.''' Since this left little for the others, Rockingham's obstinacy was met with obstinacy. The Bedfords reverted to their original request that George Grenville be given the Treasury.''' This clever advocacy of Grenville's right to the Treasury protected the Bedfords' alliance with the Grenvilles, and averted fractures in their relationship. The negotiations

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'''Add. MS 32,980. 448-451. Persons named by My Lord Rockingham to be the Friends, without whom he would take no step, 31 March 1767.

'''On 28 March 1767 Rigby advised Newcastle that Grenville would not take a post in any proposed ministry if Rockingham would allow an impartial third person to take the Treasury in his place. (Add. MS 32,980. 406-413. 28 March 1767.) After Rockingham had insisted on his majority in the Ministry, and his position in the Treasury, Rigby advised Newcastle that Grenville must be appointed to the Treasury. (Add. MS 32,981. 1-7. 1 April 1767.)

between Rockingham, Grenville and Bedford faced a stalemate. Although the pleasantries and promises to act together during the East India Company debate were pronounced, there was no hope at this time, of forcing the Chatham Ministry out of office.'''

One of the reasons why the negotiations for a coalition went as far as they did was that the American affairs were not in the political foreground. The American question was the one ideological issue which could divide the Rockinghams from the Bedfords. On 30 April 1767 the House went into Committee on the American papers. In early April the Duke of Bedford moved to Address the King on a recent Act by the Massachusetts Assembly to pardon Stamp Act rioters in the colony. Bedford wanted the Privy Council to consider the validity of the Assembly's actions in indemnifying the colonial rioters without obtaining prior consent from Westminster.''' He also stressed that the right of pardon rested with the King, and not with the Massachusetts Assembly or Parliament. The motion was rejected in the Lords 63 to 36. Although Newcastle, Portland and Albemarle left the House to avoid the division, Rockingham voted with the Administration.''' Rockingham's professed reason for not supporting the Bedfords on this motion had been the lack of

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'''Add. MS 32,981. 28-33. Substance of the Conversation with My Lord Mansfield, 4 April 1767.
'''Add. MS 32,981. 125. Newcastle to Princess Amelia, 11 April 1767. Walpole's, Memoirs, iii. 322. Burke Correspondence, i. 306-7. Burke to O'Hara, 18 April 1767.
'''Add. MS 32,981. 112-4. Division List, 10 April 1767.

communication before its introduction in the Lords. Bedford explained that since the negotiation had been broken off, and since Rockingham continued corresponding with Mr. Conway and Mr. Townshend of the Administration, the Bedfords' did not wish to risk the Ministry becoming aware of their intention in this regard.'[81] However, since Bedford had worded the motion carefully so as not to offend any Opposition member, he had expected Rockingham's support. The parties agreed to re-open their communication channels for the remainder of the session, particularly in matters concerning the East India Company debate which had proven so valuable for the Opposition's morale. Nonetheless the correspondence between the parties decreased to the point that Newcastle lamented to Hardwicke that the three parties were not talking,'[82] and on 2 May Albemarle noted that the negotiations for union were at an end.'[83] The prospect of a strong united opposition to Chatham's weakening Ministry was seemingly gone. For the remainder of the session, the Bedfords planned to act only with the Grenvilles. The Rockinghams were not to be ignored, but a union with them appeared inconceivable.

The Bedfords concentrated their efforts on the American question. On 6 May 1767 Lord Gower moved for the

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[81]Add. MS 32,981. 156-161. An account of what passed with the Duke of Bedford, 14 April 1767.
[82]Add. MS 32,981. 254. Newcastle to Hardwicke, 26 April 1767.
[83]Add. MS 32,981. 281. Albemarle to Newcastle, 2 May 1767.

presentation of the proceedings about the Massachusetts Assembly to the House of Lords. On the same day, George Grenville moved in the House of Commons for an account of the steps taken by the Ministry in reference to the actions of the Massachusetts Assembly. The House of Commons did not divide on the question, but the House of Lords defeated Gower's motion 52 to 43.[84] On a follow-up question about the Indemnity Bill later in May, the Rockingham party voted with the Bedfords.[85] After the low point of their relationship in April and May, the lines of communication between the parties reopened.[86] The Opposition was voting together against the Ministry on this American question which was surprising considering the disaagreement which occurred when the Duke of Bedford initially introduced the issue in the Lords. The Bedfords may have adopted this American issue at first to retaliate against Rockingham's obstinancy during the negotiations for a junction. Yet the Massachusetts Assembly's action was also illegal, and in a consistent fashion, the Bedfords attempted to squash the colonial Assembly's independent actions. Bedford himself acknowledged that his motions were watered-down in order to make them palatable to the majority in both Houses, and this may have contributed to the Rockinghams' decision to join

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[84] Fortescue, i. 470-471. Grafton to the King and Conway to the King, 6 May 1767.
[85] Add. MS 32,982. 97-98. Lords who voted for the Question to ask the Opinion of the Judges on the Indemnity Bill, 22 May 1767.
[86] Add. MS 32,982. 132. Bedford to Newcastle, 26 May 1767.

the Bedfords after the defeat of the first motion.'[87] However, Rockingham's support of Bedford's motion may have been due also to the action on the East India Company debate.

The earlier Opposition to the East India Company inquiry had concentrated on the printing of the Company's papers for the House in early March. Once the Ministry had agreed not to print the Company's papers for presentation to Parliament, the inquiry went into Committee, and the Bedfords did not take a lead in the discussions. They followed Grenville's direction on this issue.'[88] But in May when the debate moved to the Lords, the Duke of Bedford renewed his interest in the East India Inquiry. After asking George Grenville's advice on the government's bill for the regulation of the East India Company's dividends, Bedford lobbied against the bill in the House of Lords.'[89] The

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'[87]Add. MS 32,981. 156-161. An account of what passed with the Duke of Bedford, 14 April 1767.

'[88]This may be an incomplete picture of the Bedfords' role in the East India Company debate. Robert Jones, MP for Huntingdon and his patron, Lord Sandwich, handled this issue for the Bedfords. I was unable to review the Sandwich manuscripts or to delve into the East India Company papers for this thesis, and therefore a clear picture of the Bedfords' involvement cannot be formed. At least 9 MPs who followed Bedford were East India Company stockholders and the number of Lords who followed Bedford and held Company stock, although unknown, was greater than 1 (Lord Sandwich). Therefore, indications are that the Bedfords were more interested in this debate than the evidence at present suggests. Huw V. Bowen, '"Dipped in Traffic": East India Stockholders in the House of Commons, 1768-74', forthcoming article in Parliamentary History Yearbook, Fall 1985.

'[89]Some of the reasons against the bill which Bedford advocated were outlined in A Correct Copy of the Protest

Dividend Bill had been introduced in the House of Commons by Jeremiah Dyson on 8 May after the General Court of the East India Company had rejected Shelburne's proposals for a negotiated financial settlement between the Government and the Company. The General Court thumbed its nose at the Administration by raising the dividend to shareholders to 12 1/2 percent.'[10] The Ministry retaliated against the Company's hubris by introducing bills to regulate the Company's dividends to 10 percent, and to prohibit the splitting of stock immediately before Company elections for the Court of Directors.'[11] The Ministry's actions were supported by the majority in the Commons because most backbenchers were willing to give the government the benefit of the doubt on issues which they did not particularly understand.'[12] The Opposition leaders were mystified about which tack to pursue for optimum resistance against the Bill. Although Charles Townshend and Henry Seymour Conway of

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[9](cont'd) Against the Bill for Rescinding the East India Dividend, Basically the Protest stressed that the government's attempts to regulate private property was an infringement on constitutionally guaranteed rights of every citizen. The Protest also stated that arguments against the 12 1/2 percent dividend were also valid against the 10 percent dividend.

[10]A detailed version of the events are found in L. Sutherland, The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics, and in P. Lawson, "Parliament and the First East India Inquiry, 1767".

[11]For a discussion of the bi-partisan activities in the General Court, see P. Lawson and B. Lenman, "The Black Jagir:...".

[12]See P. Lawson and J. Phillips, "'Our Execrable Banditti': Perceptions of Nabobs in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain", Albion, 16, 3(Fall, 1984), 225-241. This article discussed the manner in which some MPs perceived the relationship between the Company and the State(232).

the Cabinet voted against the 10 percent limit in the Commons, the division favoured the Administration and the Bill was passed readily. The debates on the East India Company had seen six divisions since 25 November 1766, and on two occasions (9 March and 14 April) provided the Opposition with more than 80 supporters. Therefore it was rather exceptional for the Opposition to receive at least 80 votes against the government's 150 or so supporters in the 26 May division. A great deal of persuasion was required to keep those members in the House after the Easter recess when most backbenchers preferred to return to their country estates for the summer.'[3] The Opposition battle to defeat the Bill moved into the House of Lords.

In the House of Lords, on 3 June Bedford commenced the debate by presenting another petition from the East India Company against restraining the Company's dividends. The Duke strongly condemned the impropriety of Parliament interfering with the Englishman's right to dispose of his private property as he saw fit.'[4] On 17 and 18 June, the Lords went into Committee to examine witnesses from the Company on their petition. The Committee continued until 25 June, and on the next day the House of Lords passed the Bill 59 to 44.'[5]

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[3]Lawson. 'Faction in Politics...' 294.
[4]Add. MS 32,982. 148-9. Newcastle to Mansfield, 28 May 1767.
[5]Parliamentary History, xvi. 352-353.

The Opposition had lost the campaign on the East India Company Inquiry, but the Administration had been pressed close enough during the spring session, particularly in the House of Lords, to begin seeking an alliance with any one of the opposition groups. In the House of Lords, the division figures for this session illustrated the Administration's weakness in this Chamber. On 26 May regarding the Massachusetts question, the Lords divided 65 to 62; on 2 June a division relating to a resolution about Quebec was passed 73 to 61; and on 26 June the Dividend Bill succeeded by 15 votes (59 to 44).'[1] On 31 May the King advised Chatham:

> You must see the anxiety he (Grafton) and the President (Northington) at present labour under, the Chancellor (Townshend) is very much in the same situation, this is equally owing to the majority in the House of Lords amounting on the Friday only to six and on Tuesday to three tho' I made two of my brothers vote both those days...'[2]

Part of this anxiety was caused by Chatham's inability to even meet with his Cabinet, let alone provide it with direction.'[3] For example, on 13 May in the Commons, Charles Townshend had publicly proposed colonial taxation and linked it to a scheme for a colonial civil list. Grafton was reluctant to pursue this proposal, but because Chatham refused to step into the fracas, and since Townshend's resignation would strike a deadly blow to the shaky Ministry, he allowed Townshend to propose his taxes on tea,

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[1] Parliamentary History, xvi. 351-362.
[2] Fortescue, i. 480. King to Chatham, 31 May 1767.
[3] Fortescue, i. 477. Chatham to Grafton, 29 May 1767.

paper, glass, red and white lead and paints in the Committee of Ways and Means. The money collected was to pay for the support of a colonial government wherever necessary, and secondly, to be applied to colonial defence.[199] Despite the fact that the Revenue Bill passed the Commons without major opposition, the Bill illustrated the diverse opinions operating within the Cabinet. The rest of the anxiety was due to the internal divisions within the Cabinet. Townshend and Conway were both threatening to resign at the end of the parliamentary session, and Shelburne had stopped attending Cabinet meetings.[200] Chatham's lack of direction in the Ministry was causing serious problems, and Grafton knew that something had to be done to patch the Administration. For that purpose, he met with Lord Gower during the Whitsuntide recess at Wakefield Lodge.[201] There was no mention of this meeting in either Bedford's correspondence or journal. However in a footnote in Parliamentary History, Lord Chesterfield advised his son on 1 June that great changes in the Ministry were believed to be imminent.[202] In his memoirs, Grafton wrote that "(w)ith the King's permission and approbation I had a meeting first with Lord Gower, which produced a conference as open as either of us could wish..."[203] According to contemporaries, Grafton at this meeting offered the Bedfords any terms they wished excluding

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[199] I. R. Christie and B. W. Labaree, Empire or Independence, 1760-1776, 103.
[200] Winstanley, Lord Chatham and the Whig Opposition, 145-6.
[201] Whitsuntide was 7 June 1767.
[202] Parliamentary History, xvi. 377.
[203] Grafton, Autobiography, 142.

Grenville's participation.[204] Richard Rigby would not accept this particular proscription, according to Walpole, and persuaded the Duke of Bedford to request the dismissal of all of Lord Bute's connections in the King's employment. Grafton advised Bedford to reconsider his request, and the Lord President, Northington, convinced the King to consider Grenville for office provided he was not placed in the Treasury. The demands by the Bedford party changed considerably with this acquiescence. Grenville had agreed to support the Administration if Lord Temple, his brother, was given an important place in the Cabinet, but the Bedfords increased their demands to Grafton to include numerous alterations to the personnel of the Ministry. The Duke of Grafton rejected the Bedfords' conditions for office as outrageous.[205] Oddly, this negotiation has been ignored by scholars of the period, but the fact that the Bedfords were approached was significant, since it indicated that the Administration recognized that the Bedfords were the linchpin in the Opposition composed of the Grenvilles and Rockinghams. The Rockinghams, and to a lesser extent, the Grenvilles, were notably adamant about their supremacy in any possible Administration. Such an attitude implied that a major re-arrangement would have to occur before they would enter the King's service, and neither the King nor Grafton would sanction this prospect. The Bedfords were not perceived to be as adamant about their role in any Ministry,

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[204]Walpole, Memoirs, iii. 42.
[205]Walpole, Memoirs, iii. 43.

and Grafton followed Chatham's ploy of offering a couple of plums to buy their support. When the Bedfords demanded more plums, the Administration was indignant. The approach to the Bedfords could also have been a clever attempt to split the Opposition during the East India Dividend debate.[206] The high demands made by the Bedfords would indicate their awareness of his plan, and their lack of correspondence and their continuance of the debate on the dividend would indicate that they did not take Grafton's proposals seriously. After the passage of Dyson's Dividend Bill, the Administration commenced a new overture to both Rockingham and Bedford.[207] Henry Seymour Conway had announced publicly his intention to quit, and the King and Grafton despaired of obtaining any direction from the cloistered Chatham.[208] On 2 July Parliament was prorogued to 31 August, and the negotiations of July 1767 began in earnest.

These negotiations were referred to by John Brooke in The Chatham Administration as "...the watershed between the period of short-lived Ministries which marked the first seven years of George III's reign, and the period of comparative stability under North."[209] According to Brooke, the Court split the Opposition during these negotiations and then were able to pick up members of the Bedford party to

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[206]Walpole, Correspondence, xxii. 533-34. Walpole to Mann, 30 June 1767.
[207]Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments. R 1-820.
[208]Fortescue, i. 480-495.
[209]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 162.

provide the Ministry with much needed parliamentary support. Although with hindsight these negotiations could be seen as some sort of watershed, the Court did not immediately siphon off the Bedford party. The Opposition, although fractured by the July transactions, did not splinter until November 1767. Throughout the Fall, the Duke of Necastle feebly attempted to interest Rockingham and Bedford in uniting. Although neither would consider the matter seriously, they did not reject the idea of opposing the ministers in the Commons or the Lords when the Session commenced on 24 November. Once the Session opened, the Bedfords realized that they would never bring Grenville or Rockingham to an understanding which would allow the Opposition to form a stable and comprehensive Administration.

The formation of a comprehensive Administration was still a viable option when on 4 July 1767[210] the King had asked Grafton to find out from Lord Gower "...the hopes there might be of the Duke of Bedford and his friends coming in to join the remains of the present Administration..."[211] Gower advised Grafton that he had no authority to treat with Grafton, and stressed that his party's earlier position outlined in the June discussion still held firm. On 5 July both the King and Grafton rejected outright the idea of a 'Temple' Administration.[212] Apparently the Bedfords did not

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[210]Brooke states in Chatham Administration that this is the wrong date and should be 3 July.
[211]Grafton, Autobiography, 149-152.
[212]Grafton, Autobiography, 150-152.

advise Temple, Grenville or Rockingham, of this offer from the Administration.[213] On the same day, Conway approached the Rockinghams, but they would only agree to negotiations if the present Administration was declared publicly at an end. They also indicated that they wished to create an Administration composed primarily of Rockingham's followers, but sprinkled with Bedfords in order to broaden their base of support.[214] But this was not what the King, Grafton or Conway, the three chief protagonists, desired. The King had taken Chatham's advice that the "...vital and indispensible part of an Administration, likely to procure ease and stability...(required)...the Duke of Grafton remaining (in office)..."[215] The Administration needed to be patched, not replaced. Nonetheless, for whatever reason, the King, Grafton and Conway decided to pursue the negotiations with Rockingham.[216]

On 7 July, the Earl of Albemarle, who had gone to Woburn Abbey to visit Bedford, advised Rockingham that the Bedfords were willing to be considered in the negotiations.[217] The first question to be posed by one of the Rockinghams was "...how far the Bedfords are willing to

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[213]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 154.
[214]O'Gorman. 206-208.
[215] Fortescue, i. 493. Chatham Correspondence, iii. 277. Chatham to the King, 25 June 1767.
[216]The final decision to go ahead with this transaction was made on 6 July according to Brooke, Chatham Administration, 173.
[217]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 174.

embark without (the Grenvilles)..."[218] The question was not immediately answered. The Bedfords adhered to Grenville and Temple in all their correspondence. And on 10 July when the Marquis of Rockingham wrote to Bedford, he did not question the role Bedford perceived for the two brothers. Possibly Rockingham was still unsure of which path to take in the negotiations, but he certainly jumped to the conclusion that the Treasury was offered by the King to him alone. On 7 July 1767 Grafton had met with the Marquis and offered him the Treasury and the opportunity to create a Ministry from the remains of the present Administration, although the Grenville family was specifically excluded.[219] Grafton wanted to split the Opposition with this exclusion clause; he knew from his earlier approach that the Bedfords would not consider office without the Grenvilles' participation.

On 11 July the Marquis of Rockingham journeyed to Woburn for dinner and informed Bedford, Sandwich, Gower, Weymouth and Rigby of his discussion with the Duke of Grafton. At this dinner session, Rigby who had just returned from George Grenville's residence at Wotton, related that Grenville was pleased to participate:

> ...with regard to any administration which could be formed to defeat the secret influence of Lord Bute, and where measures should be pursued conformable to his sentiments about America, though he was

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[218]Add. MS 32,983. 149-150. Portland to Newcastle, 8 July 1767.
[219]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 175.

determined to take no part in it himself...[220]

The next day (12 July), Rigby rode to Stowe to obtain Lord Temple's concurrence on this matter, and returned to Woburn in time for dinner that evening. The Duke of Bedford recorded the evening's activities in his personal journal:

> ...there ensued a great deal of conversation, with much freedom and cordiality among the whole company, ...relating to the present situation off affairs, and the probability and means of carrying this great plan into execution. I had two several (sic) conversations, tete a tete, with the Marquis that day, in which he spoke with great frankness and cordiality.[221]

The Marquis had paid no attention to the reference about America made by the Grenvilles, and he seemed to satisfy himself with the agreement to extirpate Lord Bute's influence at Court. Secondly, this discussion at Woburn never considered the disposition of employments or any detailed policy to pursue once in office. Lord Rockingham had been advised to sound out Bedford about these matters by the Duke of Newcastle, but Rockingham chose to ignore this advice.[222] That same evening, Rockingham wrote to Newcastle that "...appearances are more and more favourable...the result of Rigby's visit at Wotton and Stowe adds much to the general promising aspect."[223] From the perspective of the Bedfords' correspondence, the transaction was proceeding favourably and openly. The only possible problem was that

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[220] Bedford Journal, 605.
[221] Bedford Journal, 605.
[222] Newcastle, Narrative , 129. Newcastle to Rockingham, 9 July 1767.
[223] Add. MS 32,983. 225-226. Rockingham to Newcastle, 12 July 1767.

Rockingham refused to negotiate directly with Grenville, Richard Rigby was however readily employed by both as their intermediary.[224] As the intermediary, Rigby was responsible for ensuring that both sides understood each other. And by his efforts, the Opposition was still united when Rockingham met with Grafton on 15 July to ask if the King was prepared to allow him to create a 'comprehensive plan' for an Administration.[225]

Rigby's role in this negotiation was as important as Rockingham's meeting with Grafton. Rockingham in a sense was the chief intermediary for the Opposition with Grafton and the Administration in this transaction. A difference of opinion arose as to the offer made to Rockingham by the Administration.[226] The meeting on 15 July took place at Conway's residence in London. Rockingham asked Grafton whether it was the King's wish to see him prepare a 'comprehensive plan' for an Administration, and if so, when would the King grant Rockingham a personal audience. In a clever word game, Grafton wished to know what Rockingham implied by the word 'comprehensive', and whether any of the current Ministers would be retained in their respective offices. Rockingham replied that no answer could be given to

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[224]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 182. Winstanley, Lord Chatham..., 162.

[225]Winstanley, Lord Chatham..., Winstanley argued that the King and Grafton had hoped to split the Opposition by giving Rockingham permission to negotiate with the Bedfords but excluding the Grenvilles from any office.

[226]Add. MS 42,085. 47-48. Lord Lyttelton to Temple, n.d. July 1767.

Grafton until a comprehensive plan had been sanctioned by the King in an audience. Grafton closed the discussion and went to discuss the matter with the King.[227]

The details of this meeting spread quickly among the Opposition and on 16 July 1767 George Grenville acknowledged his sceptism about the sincerity of the Duke of Grafton and his cohorts in this negotiation.[228] He also expressed his belief that Grafton and Conway were deviously trying to divide the Duke of Bedford from the Grenville connection.[229] These sentiments reiterated Bedford's views which Temple and Grenville had received from Rigby on 16 July. Copies of the letters sent to Bedford, concerning the 15 July meeting with Grafton, by Weymouth and Rockingham, and the Duke's written response to Rockingham, were sent by the dutiful Rigby. Bedford had noted that the meeting with Grafton

> ...confirms me in the opinion that I had conceived...that it was insidiously intended by those...to divide and separate those who had lately united themselves...to rescue His Majesty and this country out of the hands of the Earl of Bute and to restore strength and energy to the King's government upon a constitutional footing, free from favouritism and the guidance of a Minister, not in responsible employment... this design has not succeeded, but ...has the more firmly united your Lordship's...and my friends in one common cause...I think...that the present negotiation is over...[230]

The Grenvilles congratulated Bedford on his true 'Russell'

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[227]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 162-217. Brooke provides a more detailed outline of these discussions.
[228]Add. MS 42,085. 51-52. Grenville to Temple, 10 July 1767.
[229]Add. MS 42,085. 56-57. Grenville to Rigby, 16 July 1767.
[230]BEO LV, 160. Bedford Correspondence, iii. 373. Add. MS 57,811. 101-102. Bedford to Rockingham, 16 July 1767.

spirit, and concurred that the negotiations were over.[231]

But the negotiations were not finished yet. On 16 July Grafton requested that Rockingham specify his plans for 'extending and strengthening' the present Administration.[232] Rockingham replied that he would proceed only with the understanding that the present Administration was 'at an end'. Rockingham forwarded to Bedford copies of Grafton's correspondence, and a written account of his conversation with Grafton. These were obediently relayed by Rigby to Grenville and Temple. Both the Bedfords and the Grenvilles approved of Rockingham's attempt to obtain an invitation from the King, but the written response from Grafton for the King was so vague that it was impossible to figure out what it truly said.[233] Rockingham decided from his personal understanding of the letter's contents, to continue the transaction without an audience of George III. Bedford agreed with his action after perusing the letter himself. Rigby had forwarded a copy of this letter to Temple on 18 July with a request to know the sentiments of Temple and Grenville upon the matter.[234] In a letter between themselves, Grenville noted to Temple that

> [y]ou and I have insisted upon not being named for any office, nor have any of our friends been yet

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[231] Add. MS 57,811. 120. Temple to Rigby, 16 July 1767. Add. MS 42,085. 58. Temple to Grenville, 17 July 1767.
[232] Brooke, Chatham Administration, 193. Walpole, Memoirs, iii. 52.
[233] Walpole, Memoirs, iii. 52-54. Walpole took full credit for the wording of this 'puzzling' letter.
[234] Add. MS 42,085. 62. Rigby to Temple, 18 July 1767.

> specifically mentioned either by us or to us...and no notice is taken that we have insisted only upon measures and that we have expressly declined being named to any office...[235]

Yet in their letter to Richard Rigby on the same day they stated that

> they wish all success to the present negotiation upon those public principles and when they are informed of the further particulars contained in the plan to be proposed by Lord Rockingham to the King and of His Majesty's consent to its taking effect, if any honour of able and becoming place shall be allotted to their friends they will be ready to manifest the sincerity of their intentions by using their good offices to induce them to accept.[236]

Although Grenville and Temple had advised the Bedfords of their intention to adhere to their principle of 'asserting and establishing' British sovereignty over its colonies, this letter seemed to suggest that they could be induced to support the Administration. Perhaps the Grenvilles believed that the negotiations were an attempt to alienate the Bedfords from them, and in order to avoid any immediate confrontation, tempered their letters to the Bedfords.

The negotiations continued. The Duke of Grafton thought his objective of disuniting the parties 'freshly and loosely cemented' had nearly met with success, and he looked forward to one of the parties falling 'in honourably with the Administration'.[237] Conway announced to the King on 17 July his intention to resign on 22 July. Grafton advised the King

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[235]Add. MS 42,085. 64-65. Grenville to Temple, 18 July 1767.
[236]Add. MS 42,085. 67-68. Temple & Grenville to Rigby, 18 July 1767.
[237]Grafton, Autobiography, 147. Grafton to Northington, 18 July 1767.

that he would not remain in office without someone, preferably Conway, to lead the House of Commons. George III faced the prospect of being forced to accept the Opposition since without Grafton and Conway, the Chatham Administration was a dead horse. However, Conway's personal friend, Horace Walpole, was employed to change Conway's plans. This whole episode was a closely guarded secret from the Opposition, and Rockingham, in particular, never caught wind of it.

Rockingham and Bedford agreed to meet at Newcastle House on 20 July 1767.[238] But before the 9 p.m. meeting, Rockingham visited Bedford at Bedford House during the early afternoon. At that time, Rockingham was shown copies of the letters from Grenville and Temple dated 16 and 18 July 1767.[239] The letter from Temple dated 16 July stated:

> that we concurred in the idea of an extended comprehensive administration as the likeliest to be a permanent one, and that we were ready to support such an administration, tho' out of office provided they adopted a plan of measures to our satisfaction, and particularly the capital measure of asserting and establishing the sovereignty of Great Britain over its colonies...[240]

Rockingham did not comment to Bedford about either of these letters at the afternoon meeting. However when Bedford presented the same two letters at the evening meeting when Lord Sandwich, Lord Weymouth, Mr. Rigby, the Dukes of Newcastle, Portland and Richmond, Admiral Keppel and Mr.

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[238]BEO LV, 220. Rockingham to Bedford, 20 July 1767.
[239]Bedford Journal, 606. Add. MS 42,085. 87-92. Rigby to Grenville, 21 July 1767.
[240]Add. MS 42,085. 56-57. Temple to Rigby, 16 July 1767.

Dowdeswell were present, the Marquis, according to Bedford, 'flew into a violent passion'.[241] The phrase 'asserting and establishing the sovereignty of Great Britain over its colonies' was a sore point for Rockingham who believed that there should be no doubt about his intentions to maintain British sovereignty over the colonies. Rockingham believed that Grenville and Temple had questioned his integrity and sincerity, and were creating obstacles which showed that they intended to obstruct this negotiation.[242] The Duke of Bedford attempted to conciliate the Marquis by stating

> that with regard to the American colonies no new measures should be understood to be agreed upon at this meeting, unless new matter arises, but if new matter shou'd arise the sovereignty of this country shou'd be asserted and established with firmness and temper.[243]

Bedford suggested that this compromise statement on American policy be presented later to Grenville for approval, and the meeting continued. Rockingham continued his complaints about the letters from Temple and Grenville. Their advice that the negotiations not continue until an audience of the King was granted irritated the Marquis, as did their refusal to name friends to take places in the proposed Ministry, and their refusal to attend the meeting itself.[244] However, there was no invitation ever extended to the Grenvilles by Rockingham to attend Newcastle House.

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[241] Bedford Journal, 606.
[242] Brooke, Chatham Administration, 206-207.
[243] Cited in Brooke, Chatham Administration, 208.
[244] There was no indication that Temple and Grenville were asked to name friends.

Finally, the question of employments was considered by the negotiators. The Duke of Grafton, Rockingham suggested, should be retained. Although this proposal was unexpected by the Bedfords, it did not meet the resentment which the announcement that Conway must be included received. Rockingham insisted on Conway's inclusion, but the Bedfords wholeheartedly rejected this. Conway could be provided with a military or civil appointment, but not an Administration post, according to Bedford. The idea that Conway would lead the House of Commons in the new system was 'totally repugnant' to the Bedfords.[243] The Duke of Bedford and his friends remembered Conway's vote against them on General Warrants while he was a member of the Grenville Administration. They also disliked his stance on colonial problems and his contribution to the repeal of the Stamp Act. The Bedfords believed that Conway was not an asset in the Commons, and that Grenville would be the best candidate for leading the House. Bedford stressed to Rockingham that he had never been advised that Conway or Grafton would be asked to play a role during the entire two weeks of negotiations.[244] On this point the meeting broke up. Brooke in The Chatham Administration glossed over this particular point; but the Bedfords believed seriously that Grenville was needed on the Administration's side in the House of Commons. They could not forsee any benefit to be gained for

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[243]Bedford Journal, 606.
[244]Bedford Journal, 606. Add. MS 42,085. 87-92. Rigby to Grenville, 21 July 1767.

the Administration to allow a good speaker to remain on the sidelines. But the Bedfords were willing to compromise on this point if a suitable candidate was proposed by the Rockinghams.

The next day, 21 July 1767, the Duke of Bedford and Richard Rigby met with Newcastle, Rockingham and Dowdeswell at Newcastle House around 9 p.m. The meeting had been instigated by the Duke of Newcastle, but did not resolve the problems associated with Conway's employment in the projected Ministry. Although Bedford acquiesced in Rockingham's desire to have a trustworthy Minister in the House of Commons, and proposed William Dowdeswell, Dowdeswell refused to accept the offer. Thus ended the negotiation because the Bedfords would never consent to Conway playing an active role in any Administration which they themselves were supporting. All parties were at liberty, and the negotiations were formally over.[247]

The Duke of Bedford went to Streatham, Richard Rigby to his house at Mistley Hall, and the Marquis of Rockingham to the Court to explain to the King why no comprehensive Administration could be formed at this time. At Rockingham's audience of the King on 22 July 1767, the Grenvilles were blamed for the failure of the transactions.[248] The King denied ever offering Rockingham the Treasury or asking for a

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[247]Add. MS 42,085. 90-92. Rigby to Grenville, 22 July 1767.
[248]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 211.

change of Ministry. Rockingham was stunned, but rejected politely Grafton's request to meet him later that evening to discuss forming an Administration without the Bedfords or Grenvilles. On 23 July Rockingham visited the Duke of Bedford and gave him an account of his audience of the King. Bedford noted in his journal that Rockingham "...behaved very politely and cordially to me, and attempted to give many reasons for his conduct in the late transactions, which did not appear at all satisfactory to me; being founded chiefly on reports and town talk."[249] The Opposition alliance was in a tenuous position at this time. Rigby noted in a letter to Bedford that "...it is in vain to dwell any more upon the late political transaction..."[250] The members of the Opposition were still talking but certainly not about any further union to gain office. The Marquis of Rockingham had rejected all further approaches from Conway and Grafton to join their Administration, and then set out for Yorkshire, where he stayed until the fall session of Parliament. The Duke of Bedford spent the last part of July and early August with Dr. Elliot, his eye specialist, undergoing tests on his cataracts. The only politician who still held out hope for an agreement of some sort was the Duke of Newcastle. In numerous letters, the Duke of Newcastle severely chastized Rockingham for his actions during the negotiations, particularly his distrust of Grenville, and his insistence on Conway as leader of the

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[249] Bedford Journal, 607.
[250] BEO LVI, 8. Rigby to Bedford, 25 July 1767.

House of Commons, and loudly proclaimed his admiration for the Duke of Bedford to all who would listen.[251] There were others such as Albemarle and Charles Yorke who were disappointed that the negotiations failed, but they were less vocal in their criticisms than Newcastle. And no one paid much attention to the doddering old man after while.

On 4 September, a crisis in the Administration was caused by the demise of Charles Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Finding a replacement was a bit difficult for the Ministry. Newcastle worried aloud that Grafton and Conway were endeavouring to entice the Marquis into the Administration without the Bedfords. Newcastle, because he was treated with more courtesy by the Bedfords than by the younger members of his own party and the Administration, pushed Rockingham towards a junction with the Bedfords. If Rockingham entered office with Conway and Grafton without the Bedfords, Newcastle would be pushed further into the background.[252] However, Lord North, one of the joint paymasters and MP for Banbury, kissed hands for the office in late September.[253]

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[251]There were many letters from Newcastle but see in particular, Add. MS 32,984. 227-230, 276-278, 305-306. Newcastle to Rigby, 9, 14, 21 August 1767.
[252]Add. MS 32,985. 164-165. Newcastle to Albemarle, 21 September 1767.
[253]The exact date is unclear, however on 25 September 1767 Newcastle noted that the newspapers advertised that North had accepted the office. Add. MS 32,985. 215-216.

The Opposition was relatively quiet during most of September. No one appeared too interested in pushing for a comprehensive Administration except Newcastle and Albemarle who continued to hold out for some sort of junction. The Grenvilles and Bedfords were not corresponding while Grenville was touring the country. The Rockinghams held a small meeting at Wentworth in the second half of September to review the political situation after Charles Townshend's demise. Dowdeswell, John Cavendish, Portland and Burke were the main figures with Rockingham, and they were able to convince Rockingham of the necessity of giving up Conway in order to fix a union with the Bedfords.[254] After the meeting, Rockingham travelled to Newmarket in anticipation of meeting Rigby or Gower at the races, but they were not there. The Bedfords were keeping their distance from the Rockinghams. They neither encouraged nor discouraged the idea of a united Opposition. Their conversations with the Rockinghams dealt with generalities, and not with proposals for opposition or for a comprehensive Administration. Instead Bedford concentrated his political discussions on local elections.[255] Newcastle lamented "the Duke of Bedford says not one word to me of politics of any kind."[256] But Richard Rigby talked politics. His sole plan was for opposition to the Ministry, hardly a new or comprehensive

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[254]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 315.
[255]Bedford Journal, 608-609.
[256]Add. MS 32,985. 406-408. Newcastle to Mansfield, 9 October 1767.

rallying point.[257] Walpole wrote to Mann that "...everything here (is) so profoundly quiet, that all the news of England would not furnish a paragraph. The ministers are firmly seated, and opposition scarce barks;..."[258] The Bedfords were perhaps not politically active because Bedford was nearly blind and awaiting his operation at any time during November. But Bedford planned to be in the House of Lords to hear the King's Address even "...if he should be obliged to be led in..."[259] And Rigby had expressed to Lord Bessborough his hopes for 'a cordial union' with the Rockinghams.[260] Bedford had also written to George Grenville in early November. This letter illustrated the Opposition's dilemma as Bedford saw it. Even if a coalition of the Opposition could be arranged to force the Administration to resign, Bedford questioned if the union could continue in office.[261] The Bedfords were still willing to oppose the Administration, and they were certainly interested in entering office. They knew however that a coalition of the Rockinghams and the Grenvilles with themselves was necessary to wrest the Administration from Chatham, but the limitations of such a union if it was successful in entering

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[257]Add. MS 32, 985. 453-455. Newcastle to Rockingham, 13 October 1767.
[258]Walpole, Correspondence, xxii. 559-562. Walpole to Mann, 29 October 1767.
[259]Add. MS 32,986. 237-238. Sandwich to Newcastle, 3 November 1767.
[260]Add. MS 32,986. 243-247. Newcastle to Princess Amelia, 4 November 1767.
[261]Add. MS 57,811. 42. Bedford to Grenville, 5 November 1767.

office were being acknowledged.

Just before the session opened, Richard Rigby took a personal trip to Ireland. This frustrated the Rockinghams, particularly Newcastle, since most of their contact with the Bedfords was through Rigby. The chances of concerting parliamentary tactics for the opening of the session were diminished by Rigby's absence. However Rockingham himself showed little concern for this junction by staying in Yorkshire until the week before 24 November. Rigby was back in London a few days before the opening session, but no written attempts to concert actions were made by the Bedfords, Grenvilles or the Rockinghams.

After the King's speech on 24 November, William Dowdeswell led the debate for the Rockinghams by proposing an amendment to the King's Address which directly condemned the Ministry for neglecting national issues. It was a 'standard' opposition attack which should have illicited support from the Bedfords and Grenvilles. George Grenville joined the Bedfords in silence until the motion was dropped, and then led another attack, in the same spirit as Dowdeswell's, against the Ministry. However he went out of his way to attack the Rockingham's American policies, and concluded his harangue with the statement that he would never cooperate with them in any juncture.[262] The Bedfords

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[262] Burke Correspondence, i. 335-337.

did not take either side during Grenville's attack, although later Rigby explained Grenville's behaviour to the Rockinghams as a response to reports of Rockingham's vocal hostility to the Grenvilles.[263] Weymouth had personally explained to Rockingham that the Grenvilles and Bedfords were separate parties, and the Bedfords could not be held responsible for the Grenvilles' actions.[264] The Opposition was irrevocably divided. The Rockinghams and Grenvilles appeared to be irreconcilable, and therefore the Administration was safe from removal, at least in the near future. The Bedfords were fed up with the antics of both Grenville and Rockingham. They were more than willing to join with Grafton if their terms were reasonably met with.

According to Grafton, the friends of the Duke of Bedford applied for office through Lord Ossory, a Bedford, and Mr. Hugo Meynell, a friend of Grafton's. Grafton recalled that "...it was settled that Lord Weymouth and Lord Ossory, Mr. Meynell and myself should meet at this gentleman's house, as if by accident in our walks."[265] At this meeting, a list of names to be provided for in the negotiation was presented. This list of names included Gower, Weymouth, Sandwich, Rigby, Vernon, Thynne, Lord

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[263]Ibid.

[264]Brooke, Chatham Administration, 320. Brooke noted that the events since the failure of the July 1767 negotiations were leading towards the Bedfords' return to office, and although the incident with Grenville gave the Rockinghams hopes for a junction with the Bedfords, in reality the chances for a comprehensive administration had died.

[265]Grafton's Autobiography, 172.

Charles Spencer, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Essex, Duke of Marlborough, Thomas Brand, and Lord Eglinton.[266] The Duke of Bedford whose cataracts had been successfully removed on 8 December 1767, did not want to take any office. His refusal to enter office was consistent with his promise in June 1765 never to serve the King or the public again as Minister.[267] The resignation of Henry Seymour Conway, although not publicly stated as a prerequisite for the Bedfords' entrance, was announced, and in January 1768 he gave up the seals as Northern Secretary of State, and in February 1768 he was appointed to a military position which Bedford had proposed to Rockingham during the July negotiations.[268]

The negotiations with Grafton gave the Bedfords the best political deal considering all the previous attempts to bring them into the Administration since 1765. All the previous offers had alloted them from one to three positions in any Administration, and allowed a very minor role, if any, in the area of policy making. Chatham and Rockingham treated the Bedfords as junior partners who needed them and they both believed that the Bedfords would follow their lead if given minimal compensation for their support. Even Grenville, who had been their partner in the Administration from 1763 to 1765, saw their position, certainly in the

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[266]Lord Eglinton's inclusion on the list was a surprise since he appeared to be a friend of Lord Bute and one of those who always supported the government.
[267]BEO, LI. 228-231. Bedford to Grenville, 26 June 1765.
[268]Namier and Brooke, 245. See also Walpole, Memoirs, iii. 89. The Bedfords "...proposed Mr. Conway should resign..."

spring of 1767, within any Administration as less than his own followers. When Grafton agreed to give the seals of office to Gower as Lord President, Weymouth as Southern Secretary of State, Sandwich as Postmaster General, Rigby as Paymaster of the Forces, and to put the direction of American policy into the hands of Hillsborough, a man whose views ran concurrent with the Bedfords, the Bedfords jumped at the offer. In addition to the four major employments, Thomas Brand was promised a peerage, the Duke of Marlborough a Garter early in 1768, Robert Wood became an under-Secretary of State, Sir William Lynch an envoy to Sardinia, Richard Vernon clerk comptroller of the Green Cloth, Henry Thynne Master of the Household, Lord Charles Spencer was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Bolingbroke was made a Lord of the Bedchamber, and Lord Essex was restored to his pension. The Bedfords were able to satisfy thirteen of their followers by this transaction. The Duke of Grafton was accused of throwing himself entirely upon the Bedfords, and of giving the Bedfords the majority influence within the Ministry.[2'']

The Bedfords were used by Grafton for two main reasons. The first reason was the fact that Chatham was not playing an active role in this Ministry, and if the three Opposition parties united again, the Ministry would likely be defeated in Parliament. Although the Ministry would not be expected

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[2'']Add. MS 42,085. 186-188. Whately to Grenville, 29 December 1767.

to resign, a defeat would be a source of embarrassment, and it would delay the passage of legislation. Secondly, Grafton needed the Bedfords to support and consolidate his own position within the Administration. Chatham had not been informed by Grafton of these plans. Shelburne, the Southern Secretary of State and a supporter of Chatham, was apprised of the probability of an addition to the Ministry on 11 December, and he did notify Chatham by letter.[270] And Conway, whose indecision about remaining in the Ministry was no longer countenanced by Grafton since the Administration's acquisition of North, an able Commons manager, was not included in the actual negotiations because he planned to resign.[271] George III was aware and approved of the negotiations with the Bedfords although there was a disagreement over the place to be given to Lord Sandwich; because of the King's personal dislike for Sandwich, he could not be given a post which required personal audiences of the King. This problem was resolved with his appointment as Postmaster General which also provided Sandwich with much

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[270] Chatham Correspondence, iii. 292-298. Shelburne to Countess of Chatham, 13 December 1767.

[271] Brooke, Chatham Administration, 327-328. Walpole, Memoirs, iii. 89-93. Although these two sources believe that Conway planned to resign, they point to no real evidence to support this conclusion. My research has not turned up evidence to support or to reject their assertion, but it should be noted that Conway had given up on the Rockinghams in September 1767 when they refused to join the Chatham Administration after the failure of the July negotiations for a comprehensive Administration. Later in September the Rockinghams gave up Conway at their meeting in Yorkshire. If Conway retired on his own accord, he would be without friends in the Commons, and if he desired to return to the military, he would need to extract the promise before leaving the Administration.

needed financial renumeration.[272] Therefore, the acquisition of the Bedfords, which had been Chatham's own aim the year before, strengthened the Administration by disheartening the Opposition, and strengthened Grafton's position within the Ministry by removing Conway and Shelburne from the Cabinet. Grafton was left as the liaison between the King and Chatham, the nominal head of the Administration. The Duke of Bedford would not take office, and therefore provided no competition to Grafton in this role.

The Bedfords were criticized for deserting their Opposition friends, particularly the Grenvilles, in favour of their own self-interest.[273] But Grenville and Bedford had met in early December, and agreed that each were at liberty '<u>to provide</u>' for their followers.[274] Grenville had also indicated his preference to act on his own in the last session before the general election when the Bedfords quietly asked his plans for the future session in November 1767. The Bedfords had negotiated a sound political deal with Grafton. They were able to obtain promises for thirteen of their followers, and considering their relatively small size, this was impressive. They were also able to obtain the appointment of Hillsborough to the Northern Secretary of State office, and to the newly created Colonial Office. Hillsborough believed in the firm handling of the American

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[272] <u>Fortescue</u>, i. 509-511.
[273] Hillard, 113. Namier & Brooke, ii. 79.
[274] Walpole, <u>Correspondence</u>, xxii. 569. Walpole to Mann, 14 December 1767.

protests, and he advocated the use of force, if necessary, to implement Westminster's legislation for the colonies. This was totally consistent with the Bedfords' American policy advocated in the circular of January 1766. Therefore the Bedfords did not sell out to Grafton in these negotiations. They obtained thirteen places and pensions for their members, and they did not compromise their political policies advocated during their opposition.

V. CONCLUSION

The events which occurred after the Bedfords entered office in December 1767 were not the subject of this thesis. There was a general election in March/April 1768, and Chatham retired from office in October of the same year, but the Bedfords managed to remain intact; and appeared to be accumulating more places and pensions for their followers. Further research into this post-1767 era would develop the themes presented in this study of the Bedfords' two years in political opposition. The study of the events from 1765 to 1767 illustrated the need for a fuller examination of the Bedfords in this period by historians. To date the Bedfords have not been thoroughly researched in works on the rise of party in the 1760s, on studies about the American question at Westminster, and in studies on Parliament and its composition in the eighteenth century. The importance of the Rockinghams during the 1760s in Parliament should be reconsidered in light of this study. The Rockinghams may have been less politically important to contemporaries than historians have believed. Finally, to understand the 1760s, the student must see the events through the eyes of all the major participants: the Rockinghams, the Grenvilles, the King and his followers, and the Bedfords. This study of the Bedfords therefore is a limited, but vital, contribution to the knowledge of eighteenth century political history.

The accepted view of eighteenth century political history has assigned the Bedfords a minor role during the 1760s. The Bedfords were seen as a faction or proprietary party offering themselves to the highest bidder. They were grouped together because they could fetch a higher price than they would individually. The Bedfords were believed to be related by marriage ties to the Duke of Bedford or to his wife, the former Gertrude Leveson-Gower. The most recent study on the Duke of Bedford by E. Johnson has perpetuated this view of the Bedfords. The only ideological commitment apparently shown by this factious group of 'outs' was to get back into the Ministerial circle in order to accumulate more influence and money. It is hoped this myth about the Bedfords has been redressed with this detailed research into the years 1765 to 1767, offering a chance for the role of the Bedfords in political life at Westminster to be re-examined in its entirety.

The Bedfords' political activities at Westminster during 1765 to 1767 have shown them to have some of the fundamental attributes of a party as defined in the Introduction of this study. The party retained its membership to a large degree, although they did lose three members to the government benches in 1766: John Campbell, the Marquis of Lorne, his brother, Lord Frederick Campbell, and, John Stewart, Viscount Garlies. Since these three were all from Scotland, it indicated that the Scottish connection

was not as strong as the Bedfords' information in October 1766 suggested. The defection of these three also illustrated the importance for a party of the appearance of eventually returning to office. Some followers would tire of opposition, some would require the promise of employment due to their financial difficulties, and some would be in need of the government's influence in order to retain their parliamentary seats at election. Any Administration would attempt to detach these MPs with bribes and promises, and a party leader had to deal with this reality. In essence, the Bedfords illustrated the strength of their organization, and their attention to their members' needs, by only losing three members during these two years when Chatham, in particular, was actively wooing individual Bedfords.

Secondly, the Bedfords fulfilled accepted criteria as a fledgling political party by adhering to their American policy. Historians to date have not given the Bedfords any credit for influencing Parliament's approach to the American question. The Bedfords were seen as the supporters of George Grenville's American policy which included the continued enforcement of the Stamp Act in order to strengthen Parliament's control in the colonies. To a degree this was true, but the Bedfords showed their own initiative in the American question by publishing their own circular on the issues. This circular, which no one else prepared in 1766, showed that the Bedfords believed the Colonies were a

financial burden to the English taxpayer, and since the colonies could readily pay the added costs, the Stamp Act should be enforced. This enforcement wa necessary because any other action, according to Bedford, would set a dangerous precedent, and Westminster would be challenged by the colonies on all subsequent legislation relating to them. The supremacy of Westminster over the colonies could not be saved by a Declaratory Act proposed by the Rockingham Administration. The Bedfords believed in using force, if necessary, to persuade the colonists to submit to Parliament. These policies were always considered by the Bedfords in any negotiation for office. For example, the negotiations of November/December 1766 were only continued after the Bedfords received assurances from Chatham that he would not adopt any measures contrary to the ones the Bedfords and he agreed upon. And, when the Bedfords finally negotiated to enter office in December 1767, the Earl of Shelburne was replaced in the office dealing with colonial affairs, by Wills Hills, the 1st Earl of Hillsborough, whose American views were in line with those of the Bedfords. The departure of Henry Seymour Conway from the Cabinet removed the stumbling block which kept the Bedfords from joining Rockingham's proposed comprehensive Administration in July 1767. The Bedfords willingly joined the Administration in 1767 when their demands about men and measures were met by the Duke of Grafton.

It is also interesting to note how the Bedfords conducted their everyday political business. The important aspects of this political business included their letters to each other discussing the events as they unfolded, and their meetings before Parliamentary sessions at Bedford House in London. The Duke of Bedford and the major political figures of his party attended, and they discussed the strategies for the upcoming sessions over dinner. Finally, although the Duke of Bedford did not die until 15 January 1771, the Duke refused to take office in the nominal Chatham Administration for a vareity of personal reasons: the recent death of his son, the Marquis of Tavistock; the operation on his cataracts; and the disillusionment he felt over the way the King treated his Ministers in the spring of 1765 prior to his own dismissal from office. The Duke remained active in politics at Westminster, but Gower, Sandwich, Weymouth and Rigby, took over the details, as in this negotiations with the Duke of Grafton for office in early December 1767. The fact that the Duke of Bedford was able to delegate these duties to younger and more active men indicated that perhaps the Bedford party was more than a proprietory group reliant upon the Duke of Bedford's personal interest and influence as historians have suggested.

This study of the Bedford party attempted to redress the imbalance in the historiography of the years 1765 to 1767. The reality of party ideology advocated by the

Bedfords during this period provides a new angle for the student to consider when studying the Rockinghams, the Grenvilles or George III. For example, students should query whether the Rockinghams deserve the appellation: the sole forerunners of the modern style party. Further research may show that they simply adopted the tricks of the trade used in Parliament by parties like the Bedfords. Further research is also required into the composition and role of the House of Lords during the 1760s. The Bedfords were a dominant group within this House and future research may provide more names to the list of Bedford supporters outlined in Appendix 2. The activities of these supporters should be followed after the Duke of Bedford's death in 1771 in order to trace the evolution of this party.

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APPENDIX 1

John Brooke in The Chatham Administration lists the members of the Bedford party as follows:

Members of the House of Lords

John Russell, 4th duke of Bedford
Francis Egerton, 3rd duke of Bridgewater
George Spencer, 4th duke of Marlborough
Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Gower
John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich
Thomas Thynne, 3rd Viscount Weymouth
Frederick St. John, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke

Members of the House of Commons

Francis Russell, Marquis of Tavistock
John Fitzpatrick, 2nd Earl of Upper Ossory
John Montagu, Viscount Hinchingbrooke
John Proby, 1st Baron Carysfort
John Stewart, Viscount Garlies
John Campbell, Marquis of Lorne
Lord Frederick Campbell
Lord Charles Spencer
Sir Lawrence Dundas
Thomas Brand
Alexander Forrester
Richard Rigby
Richard Vernon
Richard Aldworth Neville
Thomas Gilbert
Edward Thurlow
Robert Wood
Timothy Caswall
Henry St. John
John Stephenson
Robert Jones
Henry Frederick Thynne
William Lynch
Thomas Dundas

APPENDIX 2

Active Bedford party members from 1765 to 1767.[223]

House of Commons

Thomas Brand
Sir Thomas Bunbury
Lord Frederick Campbell
John Campbell, Marquis of Lorne
Timothy Caswall
Sir Lawrence Dundas
Sir Thomas Dundas
John Fitzpatrick, 2nd Earl of Upper Ossory
Alexander Forrester
Thomas Gilbert
Francis Herne
Robert Jones
Anthony Keck
Sir William Lynch
Alexander Mackay
William Maule, 1st Earl of Panmure
Robert Maxwell, Earl of Farnham
John Montagu, Viscount Hinchingbrooke
Richard Aldworth Neville
Robert Henley Ongley
John Proby, 1st Baron Carysfort
Richard Rigby
Francis Russell, Marquis of Tavistock
Henry St. John
Jennison Shafto
Lord Charles Spencer
John Stephenson
John Stewart, Viscount Garlies
Edward Thurlow
Henry Frederick Thynne
Richard Vernon
Robert Wood

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[223]This list was culled from various sources, and cross-referenced with Namier & Brooke, The House of Commons, 1754-1790. Add. MS 32,974, 165-170. Newcastle's list of MPs who voted on Mr. Grenville's Motion for an Address to the Crown to enforce the Stamp Act. Add. MS 32,974, 169. List of MPs who voted on the first reading of the Repeal of the Stamp Act (2nd Division). Add. MS 32,974. 165-168. Division List of 2 March 1767. Add. MS 33,037 380-382. List of MPs who voted for a reduction of the Land Tax in February 1767. Simmons & Thomas, ii. 506-508.

House of Lords

John Russell, 4th duke of Bedford
George Spencer, 4th duke of Marlborough
Francis Egerton, 3rd duke of Bridgewater
John Montagu, 4th earl of Sandwich
Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Earl Gower
Thomas Thynne, 3rd Viscount Weymouth
Frederick St. John, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke
James, 2nd Earl Waldgegrave
Alexander Montgomerie, Earl of Eglinton
William Capel, 4th Earl of Essex